

CHRONICLES

of the

Old Reading Grotto

IN WHICH WE GO TO THE CALIFORNIA CONVENTION
JUNE 3RD TO SEPTEMBER 6TH, 1966



BY
SQUIRE C. LEWIS
NSS 6951

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BOB THREN, NSS 3861
SQUIRE C. LEWIS, NSS 6951
JOE PENDLETON III, NSS 7752

"They sleep generally in the open air, in winter as well as in summer, subjected to every inclemency of the weather. As may well be imagined, a buffalo hunter at the end of the season, is by no means prepossessing in his appearance, being, in addition to his filthy aspect, a paradise for hordes of nameless parasites. They are yet a rollicking set, and occasionally include men of intelligence, who formerly possessed an ordinary amount of refinement."

— J. A. Allen

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June 3rd to September 6th, 1966**

A Squire Lewis Chronicle/January 1990

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C. C. Lewis, 3102 Highland Terrace West, Austin, Texas 78731

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*DEDICATED TO BOB THREN
for teaching me that I was allowed to
give myself permission to go outside the
home county once in a while...*

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PROLOGUE

This is a transcription of the log book of a caving trip three of us from Reading, Pennsylvania took in 1966 which, at this writing, is a quite alarming twenty four years ago. Although we seem to have encountered forty or more caves during the trip, look not for technical descriptions or maps of any explorations—we always did our share of surveying and suchlike, but left the by-lines for this type of reportings to others. The log is rather about the daily life of cavers bumming around together; how they survived, the places and people they appreciated, the fixes they got into, the situations they sought out or which found them, the good and bad times, and a well distributed amount of both great and dumb stuff that happened.

We were so innocent in those olden days. Money was hard to come by and harder to save up. Our vehicles were pitiful at best. Scattered sections of interstate highway were barely opening up. Grants, funding, sponsors, the concept of anybody paying someone to go caving were not in our wildest dreams. The word “Expedition” was used only by a very few of the lofty and rich. Equipment designed for caving was non-existent. You bought webbing and sewed up whatever slings and such you thought would work best. Brake bars were available but had to be filed down and hand-fitted onto the carabiners. Vibram soles and heels were ordered from Italy and you got your cobbler to nail them onto army-navy store work boots. A set of soles usually lasted through at least three pairs of boots. Surplus WW-2 gas mask bags made the best side packs. Jumars were starting to be available, but who could afford the \$18. to get a pair?

We simply got in the car and went off caving everytime we got the least little bit of gas money saved up. The only way we could afford

to do this was by camping out 100% of the time. This does not mean camping in the modern day sense with all those toys or for the fun of living in the great outdoors. To us, it meant the style we developed to live everyday on the road in the most efficient, least expensive way we could to make the trips possible, not fool around, and get to the conventions and the caves. Our living gear consisted of old GI sleeping bags and ponchos, a Coleman stove, a box of canned food, a few old pots, and an iron frying pan. Tents and air mattresses were just one more thing to fiddle with, we had neither the space nor the time for them. A cooler was an only some-times luxury, however, Bob's banjo or dobro was a necessity. We used the national parks and forests as great places to stay, homes as it were, rather than as places to go and see; although we enthusiastically took every advantage to sight-see them while we were passing through. More often than not, our home for the night would be a ditch along the road or the concrete slab of a rest stop; anywhere we could roll out the sleeping bags in relative security for a few hours. A picnic table was always a great luxury to be sought after for our kitchen, otherwise the hood of the vehicle served just as well. Service station attendants all over the U.S. and Mexico wondered about the egg yolks, grease, and gravy festooning our hood. Shopping for fresh meats and vegetables every day would have taken too much time and they never traveled well. We survived on canned goods and other non-perishables that would cook up quick and stand extreme heat, cold, and rolling around in the load (many a rusty old mystery can with long-lost label became the surprise ingredient in the evening stew pot). Freeze dry stuff was just being invented, was too expensive, and was pretty awful anyway. Maybe it still is. When we stopped for the night, we generally unpacked the stove and made a big supper; then a big breakfast before we re-packed the gear and left in the morning. Food during the day was casual and as you found it; chips, pickles, a beer, occasionally we might put together a sandwich. There was never money to spend on nor the desire for garbage-burgers, fast food, and stuff of that ilk. But in Mexico we ate out everywhere and every time we could; it was cheaper for one thing than cooking for ourselves, but mainly it was too flat out delicious to pass up any chance to oink up on their marvelous offerings. Mostly we didn't get sick.

From our accumulated previous years of evolving our modus operandi (and with Bob as our mentor), we had all become quite adept, even famous, canned-good chefs. We rarely used ready-mades such as Dinty Moore beef stew or Spaghetti-Os. A typical stew might be a can each of meatballs, beef gravy, mushrooms,

potatoes, corn, and garbanzos. Then the essential, key ingredient, a handful of chopped, fresh onion. The car glove compartment was always full of fresh onions (which sometimes startled unprepared passengers). After two or three days of a canned stuff diet, it all tastes the same and all tastes of can; no one could tolerate it for any great length of time at all. But a simple handful of fresh onion deletes the can taste and brings out the individual tastes and bouquet of the ingredients, opening a whole new world of culinary delights. A handful of onion went into virtually everything we prepared, morning and night. Another wide spectrum included stirring a couple of miscellaneous cans into noodles, rice, or pinto beans; always, of course, with the magical minced onions included. The only other fresh mainstays we stocked, which traveled well without a cooler, were eggs, bread, bacon, margarine, and sometimes potatoes. In Mexico we very quickly latched on to those marvelous little, sweet, fresh-picked garlic buds. Very importantly, we also maintained a full box of spices, herbs, and condiments and enhanced each creation according to our daily and individual mood. Small wonder that ours was always the most popular table in any campground.

(While I was writing this paragraph, my fourteen year old daughter made herself a Kraft Macaroni and Cheese Dinner for lunch. When I went to get my share, the sight of the bland yellow noodles in the bottom of the pot left me cold and the urge for some of our good old food overcame me. So I threw in a can of ranch-style beans, half a can of chopped-up spam and just a touch of onion for old time's sake. A delicate squirt of ketchup and bovril together with a pinch of marjoram, thyme, and sage fine-tuned the creation to perfection. A complimenting side dish of cinnamon applesauce completed the feast; the old master touch was still there; it was ambrosia. But when I offered Cristin a chance to experience how far an open mind and truly inventive cooking could go, she threw up her hands in horror and ran screaming to the phone. Such heavily emphasized words as "Gross!!" and "You wouldn't believe!!" emanated from the room. She tells me her friends have sworn never eat here again. How sad. I've got to get this kid out on the road more.)

You may, if you hang around enough caver campfires, hear some ancient geezer in a wheelchair speak of the "Old" Reading Grotto (pronounced Redding). He is talking about Bob and Joe and me. Although we continued to rally together at conventions and meets, geographic distance and other factors separated us after this trip and the reins of the Reading Grotto were passed to the hands of

others. These were surely excellent and dedicated cavers who contributed to the good name of the Grotto; but the old compatriots who knew us “back when” have separated out our reign with this “Old” tag, the significance may vary per the beholder. Not that we were all that special. Berks County, Pennsylvania’s longest cave probably isn’t a block long and a grotto meeting with three or four people attending was considered a big success. But the three of us went and did. We made every regional meet from New York to Alabama and never missed a national convention. In between, we’d be at the PSC Fieldhouse or off wherever the action was, ranging down through the Appalachians as far south as Huntsville, Alabama. Our longevity and endurance at campfires drew us a certain notoriety and our big pots of rare foodstuffs made us lots of friends. We were, in the kindest analyzation, colorful and, God help them, may have been chosen as role models by certain of the incoming novitiati. By our good example, we helped establish dignity in social over-indulgence, bureacratic elites sought our counsel in matters concerning the great hairy masses, and Bob and Joe’s steadiness, dependability, and skill on rope and underground were always welcome on difficult explorations. I was never all that great inside caves. My best service was in logistics and supplies; which means that when a fellow was short and lacked a beer in the wee hours, I could usually be depended on to find a spare in an inside pocket of the Magic Coat. We were never much worried about glory, never published anything, and were all of us really rather shy; but we did help a lot of other people do a lot of good things. I think the main thing was that we were always there and always ready to cave or party and didn’t care which. This, then, is what they mean when they talk about the “Old” Reading Grotto. We sure did have a lot of good friends and a lot of good times.

The women’s movement was really getting moving at the time. In the intervening years, I’ve taken beaucoup lumps as right thinking women have tried to shape me up and teach me proper respect and truly equal treatment of their sex. I’ve tried real hard to learn; I like women a lot and have always wanted them to like me. We did a lot of admiring (from afar) of women on the trip. After careful consideration, I have not changed any of the 1966 script. Some observations may reflect nomenclature now considered offensive, I hope not, but no degrading was ever meant toward anyone ... we certainly did notice and admire the hell out of the beautiful women who crossed our path. Wishful thinking ? ... you bet—but we were way too dumb, hung up, and shy to make any constructive moves. Unless Joe or Bob are keeping something from me, none of us

came within a million miles of scoring during the entire trip. So, please don't no one be offended because we happened see and acknowledge some of the beauty along the way.

Don't look for proper grammar, complete sentences, or logical tense sequence in this book. Basically, the log is transcribed as it was scribbled down sitting under trees in many strange places or going down the highway in the back seat of the Rambler (a Rambler was a little four door sedan, the last gasp of Nash Motors and an early forerunner of today's economy car, a pretty good little car). To try to make the text literate would surely ruin it. Also, there is no attempt made to clarify every technical detail or in-joke that most cavers will automatically understand. To the reader not familiar with cavers and caving things, read around the incomprehensible and, perhaps, you may enjoy getting to know us through our other antics and adventures. There are no bad guys in this book, with the possible exception of the guy in the Goodrich tire store.

Likewise, there is no attempt made to identify all the folks whose names appear. It would take another book this size to do so. The oldtimers will know them all. They can be found scattered throughout the old publications; many of them, in fact, have become downright international legends. This was a time when great expansion in possibilities, technology, and undreamed-of discovery was about to burst forth. The national status symbol was to do the huge 400+ foot drop in Fern and everyone was still ga-ga over Bill Bell's unbelievable 503 foot free-fall rappel into Ventana Jabalí. Sótano de Tlamaya just had been bottomed out at 1,488 feet making it the deepest cave in the hemisphere. Terry Raines was still trying to get charter members for the AMCS and Kenny Laidlaw had just founded the Greater Guano Grotto the year before. But these were just portends. In the fall of '66, right after this trip; the Texas gang reported a hole in Huautla de Jiménez they thought was going to go, but they would have to go back with more gear to find out—its name was Sótano de San Agustín. At the same time T.R. Evans came back from a quick Christmas trip with news of a humungous hole they'd found above Aquismón. They figured from dropping rocks that it was at least 800 feet deep. It was called Sótano de las Golondrinas. They would have to find someone with a rope this long and go back over spring break. The infamous Paint Rock Valley Grotto was being formed in Alabama, Old Man Wisdom was pushing the search for the Holy Carbide Light in Texas and, in Pennsylvania, Harry Hart had just started the ASS. Whole new worlds in exploration, technical equipment,

mobility, and organization would be opened up in the decade to come. But it was the names in this log (and a whole lot more) whose hard work and uncounted miles opened many of the doors and laid a lot of the groundwork with their antiquated trucks, leather shoulder and crotch patches, prussick knots, and bad Spanish. (Remember when rope-burn scars were a status symbol??) With the torch passed, the new generations have taken the sophistication of the science forward in feats of exploration, technical improvements in equipment, new far-flung areas, serious expedition organization, money-getting, and bureacratics to heights of which we only had dreamed. The torch has been carried forward with great glory by those of you who followed and we lift our glasses of geritol in envious praise. But, as you read these old unidentified names and don't know who they are, take my word or research the old publications; they are all heroes and all had their share in leading caving to where it finds itself today. Find you a bottle of Big Daddy wine or a can of Old Frothingslosh and lift a toast to them and all their unrecorded partners.

In 1986, after an absence of more years than an honest caver should admit, I made it to the New Mexico Convention. As we were sitting around telling our admirers (?) how it was back when caving was rough, a beardless youth shocked me by asking "What was this Greater Guano Grotto of which you speak??" It behooves me to say a few enlightening words here lest there be others who know not of this great historical entity which had so great an impact on the NSS in days of yore. The Greater Guana Grotto was created to fill a perceived need for a rallying point for like-thinking cavers whose unification ought not be restricted by geographically defined boundaries as were the NSS'es formally chartered grottos. Quoting the old literature, the Grotto would represent "that great grey area of true cave explorers along the continuum somewhere between the psychedelic teeny-bopper (interpreted as a state of mind rather than an era of life) and the research scientist (a state of mind sought after by academicians)." Its three founding principles were to promote Ultra Conservation, Extreme Liberal Fellowship, and Unprecedented Cave Exploration. At the time, the NSS was tightly controlled by Gods, elites, and bigots. Special interest and divisive factions flourished and rhetoric stifled all progress. Lots of folks neither liked nor respected each other. The everyday working cavers were viewed with contempt and, at best, considered a sometimes-necessary nuisance. A few overviews of how the GGG attacked these conditions appear scattered through these pages and and a brief note on its accomplishments is in the epilogue. Kenny introduced the GGG at the Indiana Convention in

1965 and it burst forth in full strength with one hundred and fifty charter members at the California Convention. I served as the figurehead Chairman from 1966 through 1970, Laidlaw was the power behind the throne and, hiding behind the title of Secretary-Treasurer, was the driving force, evil genius, newsletter editor, and kept the money safe. In 1970, no less august a personage than Jack Stellmack vacated his long time presidency of the NSS, pierced his ear, grew back his beard, and moved upward to assume the higher honor of Chairman of the GGG. For a true insight into the historical perspective of the period (and a few laughs), search out the faded old dittoed newsletters and learn of some of the great battles of yesteryear when the Shaggy Dogs challenged the might of the Establishment.

And about beards. Virtually no one except cavers wore beards in those days. The by-then-extinct Beatniks had never been left out of California and Hippies were just being invented. No one had actually really seen a Hippy yet. The tradition that had been passed on to us by our oldtimers, mainly from the D.C., PSC, and MAR gangs, was that you never shaved on caving trips. With no facilities or hot water, it was the practical way to go and, anyway, we rarely went into civilized places on a trip. Certainly it would be foolish to deny that we got a vicarious thrill in seeing how much stuff we could sprout. You could always tell how long a gang of cavers had been out in the field by how long the fuzz on their face was. But many a time along the by-ways, we had to be quick to explain what we were and what we weren't, lest we be killed or otherwise grievously harmed.

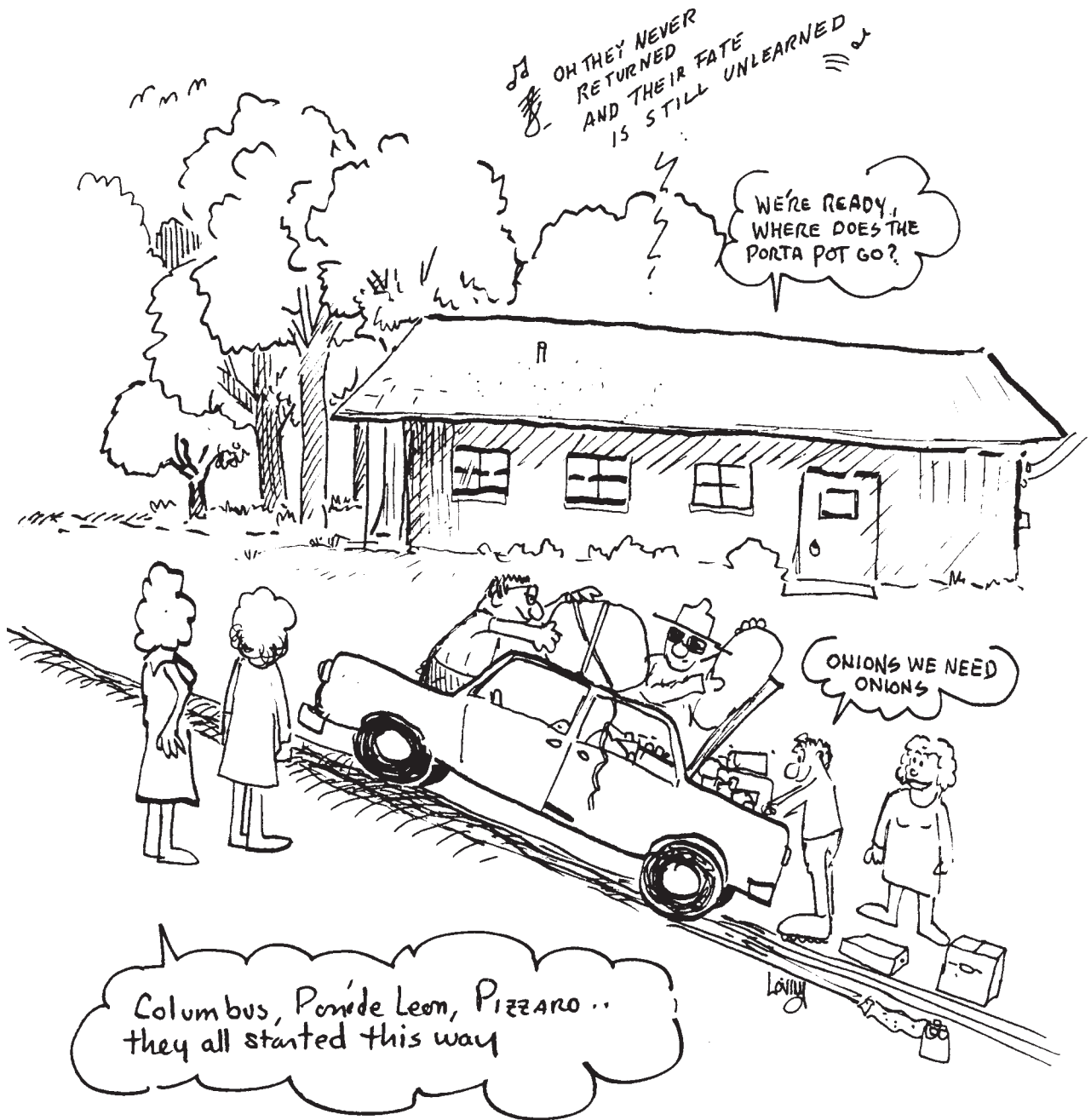
In the text, a constant preoccupation with showers emerges. Cavers have the reputation of being less than hygienic, downright smelly dirty, if you will. But with us, this evolved from the logistics of our way of life rather than any affectation. We carried an old timey wash basin and washed up every morning with cold water from the gerry can. We tried, sometimes it didn't show. But showers were hard come by in those days, not many campgrounds had them. A few modern KOA'es were showing up; who could afford them ?? But we were constantly preoccupied with searching for showers and when camped near one, it was a great luxury to use them every day. Occasionally when ten or twelve days went by without success and the rather crowded interior of the Rambler seemed to get smaller and smaller by the day, the trip had to be halted while we searched the by-ways until we found a relief facility. Some of the old rotting roadside pine-slab enclosures must have been left over from the Great Depression, but they

saved us more than once. They did the job and we were glad to find them. The biggest fear has to be that newcomers, using us as examples of what they might imagine to be cool, may have copied us without realizing our constant pursuit of and hunger for a good steamy hot shower. If the more obvious presentation was carried forward as an tradition without the mitigating showers whenever found, many innocent people have probably suffered over the years. (Apropos to nothing, remember how your first quarter always lasted just long enough to get soaped up good and then you'd find out your other quarters were in your pants out in the car??).

Another preoccupation evolves around laundry. Shirts and pants presented no major problem and we generally changed them anytime anyone complained. But tee shirts, underwear, and the ilk needed constant refreshing. Our adventures with laundrying are well documented in the text. Additionally these tribulations open a brief but profound thesis evoking rather shocking philosophical questions that might well alter our entire cultural approaches to the attendant issues.

Gas and beer prices are another worriment that preoccupied us virtually every day. These were our two major expenses and a daily search for the cheapest was critical to how far we could go and how long we could stay out. We had every penny we could scrounge up with us and we had no slack at all. Our biggest triumph was 19.9 cents/gallon in Texas. Had the gouging we got on the backside of Yosemite at 49.9 cents/gallon been the norm, the entire month in Mexico would probably have been eliminated. So these fiscal policies were of extreme importance. A big status at any convention was who had unearthed and brought the cheapest, weirdest, off-brand beer. It probably still is. But the affectation began from most practical and necessary reasons. How cheap we could buy beer directly dictated how much we could have; this made our expertise in locating the cheap stuff very important to our well-being. Again, I suspect it probably still is for those who have followed in our path. Cheap beer was surely why cavers first started going to Mexico and it was purely an coincidence and an afterthought that they happened to find out that the country had all those caves. Throughout history, many of the greatest discoveries have emerged from simple nomadic wanderings in search of humble sustenance.

*Squire Charles Lewis
Austin, Texas April 29, 1989*





Pennsylvania > California

June 3rd, 1966, Friday Mile 0, Odometer 40,642 Reading, Pennsylvania
Bob Thren, Joe Pendleton III, Squire C. Lewis

Marylou drops Squire off at Bob's, 5 PM per schedule, Joe arrives shortly thereafter. Stowed all gear in Rambler. No room for cooler, an unnecessary luxury and we will save all that money for ice—besides warm beer gains heightened bouquet and flavor. Anyway the cooler still stinks too bad from when the fresh-dug oysters were left in it for three months. Big hugs and kisses from Mom Thren and leave Reading 8:15 PM EDS.

Quit 1 AM Mile 260, odometer 40,902 Stop Pa. Turnpike rest stop north of Pittsburgh near Ohio Line.

6/4 Saturday Lv. 7:15 AM, Stop 10 PM. Gas at 40,918,. Traumatic experience getting through Chicago with twelve lane wide expressways in rush hour, Bob throws up the wheel in horror, Squire takes over in equal horror, we clear this nightmare shaken but unharmed. Camp at rest area north of Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. Chased off by cop. Found new home in a ditch up the road. All the mosquitos from all the Thousand Lakes attack us. Hot and muggy and must stay face-and-all encased stifling and breathless in sleeping bags, any exposed inch is savagely attacked. Total misery. Joe's face and lips grotesquely swollen at dawn.

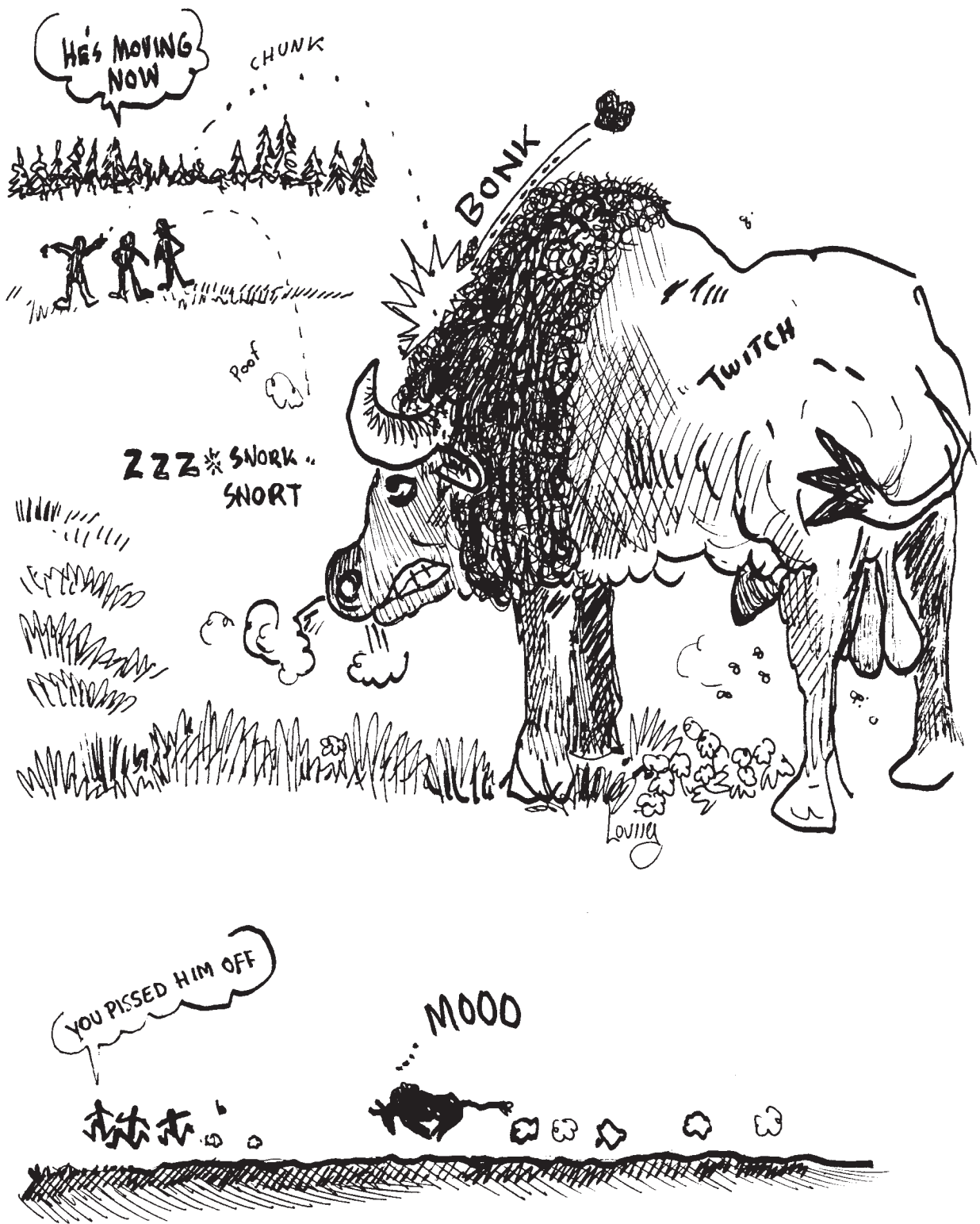
6/5 Sunday Lv. 8 AM EDS—Mile 963 od/41,605. Hit Pipestone Nat'l Monument, very educational, otherwise dull; a few shallow trenches in a few acres of meadow. Red stone for all Indians' official sacred peace pipes came from here, was traded all

over the U.S. and into Mexico and beyond. Bought Golden Eagle pass for \$7.00, gets us free camping homes in national parks and forests all across the country. Cross South Dakota plains to Badlands. Camp in same..

6/6 Monday Mile 1,693 od/42,335 Climbed all over Badlands—they are bad, a great place. Hot, hot, dry, dry; mostly made of dried mud in beautiful pastel-colored stratified layers. Thru Black Hills to Mt. Rushmore. This has to be man's ultimate foolishness. The magnitude of the work is certainly awesome. but the mental aberration that had to destroy an otherwise splendid escarpment in these beautiful hills to stick this stuff out here escapes comprehension. No wonder the Indians get mad, these hills are their Holiest of places. This junk belongs in downtown D.C. George Washington would have probably approved, but Teddy Roosevelt would have had a hizzy. On thru Scenic 16A thru Needles, pretty fine, beautiful pines, ravines, passes—Custer State Park, saw three elk, antelopes, & mule deer. Learned that if you are way out in the middle of a wide prairie field and throw stones at a giant bull buffalo who is standing there asleep, he will commence toward you and you will quickly find out how fast you really can run. Camped at Wind Cave Nat'l Monument. Stop od/42,569, Mile 1,927.

6/7 Tuesday Good sleep. Did Wind Cave first thing. Boxwork exceptional, little else, Smoky wouldn't give us permit to go on beyond his walkways. Prairie dog town. Went to Jewel Cave, bad timing with tour schedule, couldn't wait, so had to by-pass. On into Wyoming to Devil's Tower Monument, great thing, 865 foot high basaltic upthrust. Inspected same. On thru miles of nothing to Powder River Pass. Fine pines, antelope & mule deer. Crossed Pass thru snowstorm and down Tensleep Canyon. Fine, wide, expansive gorge; the countryside is getting incredible. Cross miles of nothing-shepherd prairie. They really still use those funny, roundtop, Basque shepherd wagon homes. On past Cody, camp in deep ravine in tunnel section of Buffalo Bill Reservoir. Attacked by rain, pack rats, & falling rocks. Pack rats kept out of sleeping bags by self-generated gas derived from banquet of corned beef and Big Daddy wine. Moved shelter in middle of night due to falling rocks flaking off canyon wall. Stop 43,065.

6/8 Wednesday On thru Wapiti Canyon in rain & overcast. Raggedy, crumbling, weird canyon walls—most impressive. Hit Yellowstone mid-morning. First past Yellowstone Lake, we are mind-blown by first steam volcano on brim, the visual, audible,



and smellable reality beats a thousand pictures. Saw first bear, moose. Bears like Korn Kurls. Mud Volcanoes; a nastier thing never was than the Devil's Cauldron, seething, black, gurgling, living evilness. Devil's Throat belching black mud and disgusting noises mightily from underground caverns. Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone most fine with great gorge, Upper Falls 169 feet, Lower Falls 308 feet. On to Tower Falls with ground squirrels, they like Korn Kurls too. Also saw marmot. Weather shifty; sunny then overcast, heavy hail at mud volcano. Petrified Tree unimpressive. Museums at centers good. Mammoth Hot Springs a mass of open-air cave formations; great heaps of calcite, travertine, rimstone dams, etc. Earthquake area of geological interest. Excellent campsite at Indian Creek—highest in park, good pine cover, fairly primitive, uncrowded. Juiced it around fire. Good stew, cool, crisp night for sleeping.

6/9 Thursday Start 43,215. Squire up early, attempted fishing, couldn't find a permitted area, then couldn't find fish. Got real close to 3 elk, 3 moose. Leisurely breakfast. Water frozen in pan, Thren, the outdoorsman, washes in it. All got to see elk on departure. Thren destroys Appollinauris Water. How could anyone resist picking up some samples at the Obsidian Cliffs ?? Hit Norris Geyser Basin, a square mile of very impressive nastiness; hissing, steaming, belching, stinking, sulphurous, toxic-destroyed wasteland as far as the eye can see and the nose can smell. Large herds of Elk in meadows. On thru several other basins, all different, all with neat gurgling and spouting stuff. Paint Pots particularly nice as well as Morning Glory Pool. Pool marred by polaroid tear-offs and other touri mementos as are all places with walkways to them. Old Faithful somewhat of a dud. Old Faithful Village a most intensified tourist trap—hamburgers 50 cents each and gas 37.9 and 41.9 cents a gallon !!!! Crossed continental divide about 3:30 PM MST. Recrossed at 4:00 PM. Entered Grand Tetons (Spanish translation—Grand Big Boobs; yes, this is apt). Quite magnificent, heavy snow still in crevasses. Sun position not best for photography. Excellent visitor's center with a smattering of kindred groaty climber types among the touri. Hunted up Jenny Lake campground—some evidence of climbers, but no enroute cavers found. On to Jackson Hole, neat town if we were rich. Joe found owner of back alley climber shop on street who opened up and sold Squire a pair of second hand kletterschues for \$ 8.50. Proceed on towards Alpine, Wyoming thru valley; mountains but softly rolling, limited pine covering in patches, the "Dairyland of Wyoming." Fine campground all to ourselves, but rained like hell from middle of night to daylight. Plastic tarp pulled over us did fair job, but some

wetting of sleeping bags. Super pressure jet water fountains make filling the jug an adventure. At dawn; a thundering of many hoofs, whistlings, and shoutings. Real-life cowboys chase a herd of cattle down the rugged ravine and thru the middle of our home as we lay helpless in our sleeping bags, a rude and nearly terminal awaking.

6/10 Friday Start 43,950, mile 2,987. Due to rain and fear of more thundering herds of cattle, broke camp and treated ourselves to luxury of buying breakfast at cafe in Montpelier, excellent; western cafes know how to feed a fellow. On into Utah. Through massive limestone beddings with many cave openings. All inaccessibly high and on far side of tumultuous mountain creek. Screwed around in Salt Lake City, arranged in store to send off Squire's busted camera. Purchased new snow grip tire, \$22.32, after endless difficulties. A town of many, many beautiful, statuesque, magnificently endowed ladies. Past Salt Lake, surrounded by barfy mountains of various obnoxious colors. Into Salt Flats and the ultimate hostile environment—Bonneville Salt Flats. Into Nevada, endless miles and miles of sagebrush-covered sand with surrounding mountain ranges far away across the plains—nary a tree in sight, high or low. Many 29.9 cent/gal. gas stations in evidence just after we fill up at 35 cents. Camped on high spot with wide open desert all around us just after Elko. A splendid night, millions of stars in a vast, unbelievably clear sky—coyotes obliged by giving a few romantic howls—a cool, steady crosswind. Lay awake late in the bag, just enjoying. The most unlikely, scraggly, nothing campsite we've had; but somehow touched by a holy mystic—an aura I can't describe, but will remember a long time....

6/11 Saturday Start 42,935. Clear and cloudless. Excellent Thren spam & onion omelette breakfast. More endlessness of sagebrush, sand, and treelessness. On to Reno. Fantastic downtown area, sidewalk slot machine joints, clubs, hundreds of people all over at 11 AM. Many outstanding girls. Grocery shopped. Good store and bought 79 cent sixpack of "Fishers." Lunched enroute on sour lemon drops, milk, and beer. Thru Carson City and past Lake Mono. A pristine blue jewel. Inspected very carefully at border by California Fruit Fly Inspectors. They reluctantly let us proceed into their state, obviously wanting to hose us down and dip us first. Entered area of 41.9 to 49.9 cent/gal. gas, a serious threat to our finances.

Into Yosemite thru horrifying Tioga Pass 9,941 altitude. Maintained 9,000 altitude most of the next 10 miles thru gigantic granite outcroppings, immense lodgepole pines, and red pines.



Great canyon, a gorge (sic) of immense depth and sheer granite walls. Yosemite Village the most amazing part of the trip—many thousands of campers with every conceivable type of camper vehicle, roughing it out all jammed together two feet apart in about 30 huge campgrounds with street lights, sidewalks, luxury modern shopping centers, pinball machines, restaurants, lodges, cabins by the hundreds—a truly dumbfounding sight. A haze of barbecue smoke covers the entire area eight feet off the ground. Thousands of bold, anxious young maidens in the very tightest possible bodily coverings with clean-cut would-be studs in pressed and starched shorts flexing gymnasium muscles for their benefit. Saw the “Fire Fall,” the Smokies dump a bonfire off one of the sheer cliffs to provide the folks with a spectacular; it would seem they don’t think the cliff by itself is enough. Backtracked 18 miles to top of canyon to find primitive campground. Only old fashion outhouses, thus very few other folks there, magnificent spot. Camped under huge red cedars, clear night. Too tired for supper, juiced up on second bottle of “Big Daddy,” and to bed.



The Convention

6/12 Sunday Start 43,465. Start down Canyon again to Village, viewing sites, a plethora of various falls and peaks. Again rivalling the natural phenomena are the hundreds of tightly clad, rubbery-reared young things; everywhere in evidence proudly competing in a marathon bosom display of unparalleled quantity and quality. Viewed also many more falls and huge trees from many more points. Drove to and climbed Sentinel Point, a huge exfoliating dome over 8,000' elevation overlooking the entire canyon and park from all directions, perhaps 4,000 to 5,000 feet above the canyon floor.

Dropped down out of Yosemite into Fresno. From water freezing in the pan last night to 95 degree temperature with royal palms and desert-type country. Fruits and grapes abound thru irrigation. Goal was to find Joe's new rope which was to have been shipped there—of course, it hadn't arrived yet, arranged to have it sent over to Tulare for pickup. Back up the hill again, more horrifying drops, and into Kings Canyon/Sequoia Nat'l Park. Saw first Sequoia on road up, the most magnificent, mind-boggling sight yet.

Arrive Convention Headquarters odometer 44,680; Mile 4,048 from Reading, Pennsylvania.

Checked out giant forest, trees, and camp areas. Found Koehlers, Sarah, George, and Bruce Corrie. Set up camp. Hot community campfire, Smokies have provided us a great, isolated site for this function in a magnificent Redwood/Sequoia grove. They have also assigned the cavers our own personal Smoky to supervise all our extra-curricular activities for the week, Ranger Terry Gustafson. He appears a good fellow, we will give him our cooperation and guide him into our fellowship. Laidlaw in evidence, Roger and



THE BATTLE LINES ARE DRAWN ... THE SHORT HAIRS ATTACK

lit

Caree Brown, Yogi and Gale Beach, and the everpresent Blumenstein. To bed reasonably early and reasonably drunk. Met with Rick Nelson who moved in with us.

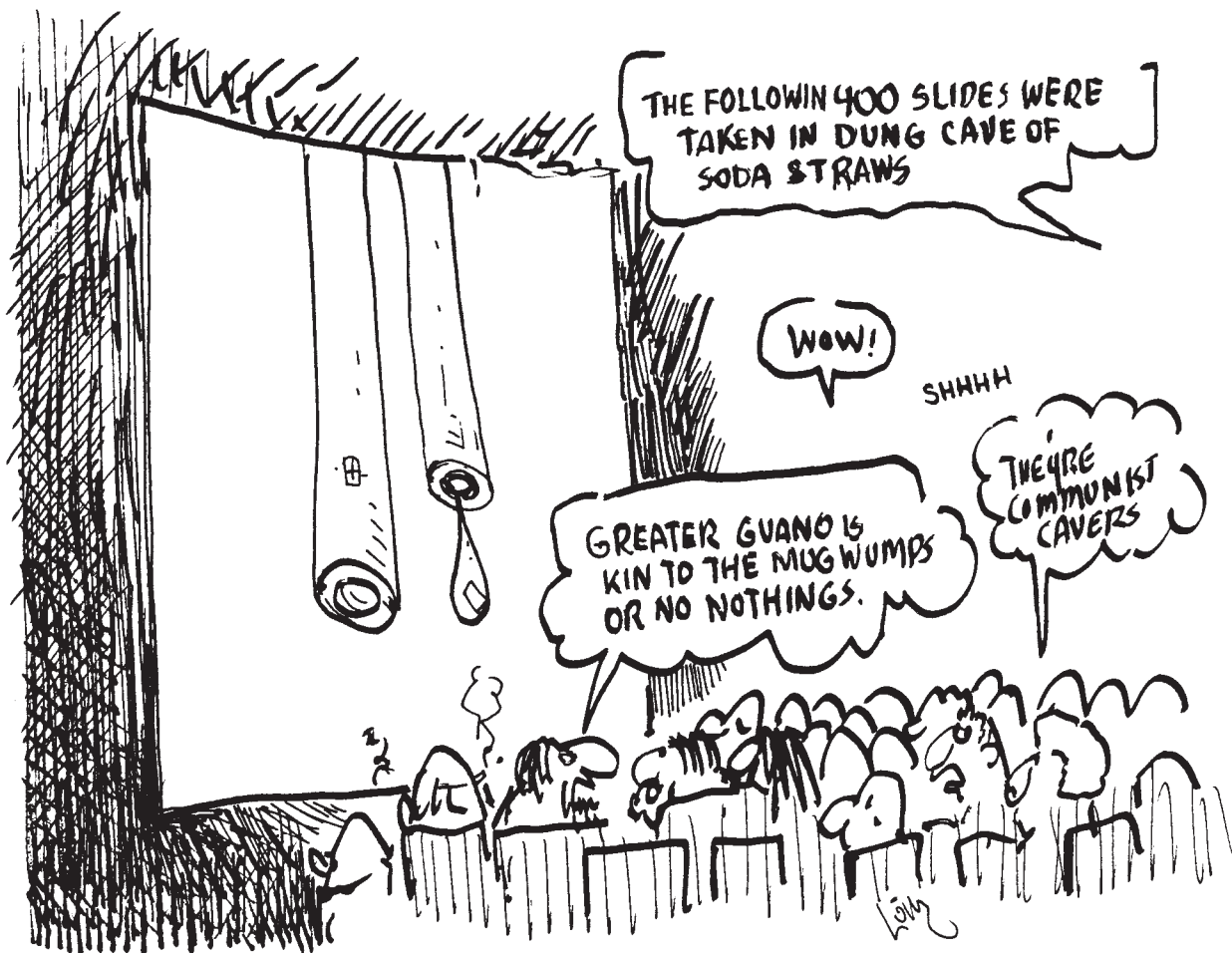
6/13 Monday Up and registered. Poked around area. Texans showed up. Bill Bell, Terry Raines, Roonie Burnett, Ron Ralph, Ed Alexander, Charlie Jennings, Susie Loving, Chip Carney, others. Sight-saw among trees. Climbed all over giant fallen dead tree. Climbed Moro Rock. Thren's statement on Moro Rock looking down on thousands of massed pines assembled below "Now I suppose you trees are all wondering why I've asked you to gather here today...." Fine campfire at night. *TOOK SHOWERS THIS DAY.*

6/14 Tuesday Rick directs us down the Valley to Three Rivers and out canyon to Clough's Cave, a nastier, more hostile place nowhere, though interesting. Could be a reasonable place except for the oppressive atmosphere after the high altitudes—temperature 102 degrees, muggy, barranca- type country. Rick's statement when we can't find the right road to turn on- "We should have been where we are by now." Hospital Rock of interest with pictographs. Somewhere in this period saw slide show of first assault on El Capitan. Made fine spaghetti supper.. Some New York caver has mightily upset the Smokies by climbing way up a Sequoia to rappel off—we are all on serious probation. Went to Hoedown. Closed campfire. Established safety rule that you should not go to bed until it's light enough to find it.

6/15 Wednesday Slept late. Poked around area. Good breakfast of Onion Pancakes. Approached outside sessions hall by Russ Gurnee with most friendly overtures and we had a real good talk. He is concerned about yesterday's incident and I told him this was a rich city boy, a newcomer, not one of us; but that we had already put him in Purdah, he was our Green Tree nominee, and the tone was set for how the membership would view his and similiar actions. Told him that the rift between the cleanshaveds, scientists, and motel people and us right-thinking people was getting ugly. Stephenson's crack about "Shaggy Dogs" was a prime symptom. That they needed to take a hard look at the past record and they would find it was the straights, untrained, and motel people who historically caused all the bad vibe incidents with police and locals. That they needed to look behind our affectations of dress and decorum and they would see that we , in fact, had quite rigid boundaries of behavior; that our areas were kept in good



order, and we policed our own trainees and also-trieds until they followed our good examples and standards of behavior. That the GGG, far from being the tongue-in-cheek entity it seemed to be, had already united all the best of the working, doing, upper echelon cavers on a nation wide basis. Far from being a joke, we followed our three founding principles of exploration, conservation, and fellowship; and actively inflicted them on and demanded them of those around us. We were the ones doing the majority of the big new work and surveying, making conservation and public relationships a requirement and an actuality to the newcomers, and maintaining boundaries of dignity and decorum at the debaucheries and orgies. We were the teams who supported, led, and did the cave trip hard work for the scientists, photographers, and paper writers so they could do their stuff. They would do well



THE GREATER
GUANO GROTTTO;
A HISTORIC EVENT IN THE
HISTORY OF CAVING -



to appreciated us and make friends with us, the GGG would provide the vehicle and the machinery to do this and would heal the seriously developing rift in the NSS membership, expose the bureaucracy and rethoric, and result in the NSS being a united organization.

Convention barbeque in PM, reasonable enough. Tour nasty road to Crystal Cave, convention sponsored. Nice enough cave, we enjoy Smokey the Bear's (Terry Gustafson) well meaning explanations, Bill Biggers livens it up pointing out the travelog's errors and embellishing same. Trip back up canyon wall in dark. Closed bonfire.

6/16 Thursday Attended Tlamaya Sessions, AMCS Mexican Cavers Luncheon, Vertical Caving Sessions including Cuddington's. Session on '66 Rio Camuy expedition. Long Caves paper. Photo Salon in PM. Annual meeting of Greater Guano Grotto a most subversive success. Meeting under the Sequoias, we re-affirmed our founding principles of unprecedented cave exploration, ultra conservation, and extreme liberal good fellowship. We voted a pox on malarkey, bureaucratcs, and the bowling team mentality that would enmesh us. We will unite to defeat apathy, unify purpose, and promulgate our right thinking standards. Discussed how to shape up the NSS, i.e. stop bureacratic rhetoric, improve their



AND I MOVE THAT WE SHAGGY DOGS REORGANIZE THE N.S.S. IN OUR IMAGE

I SECOND

I THIRD IT

WHEN'S THIS OVER? LETS GET BACK TO THE BEER

HERE HERE

WILL YOU GET SERIOUS?

THE N.S.S WILL NEVER RECOGNIZE US

GREATER WHAT?

GUANO

public behavior and respect towards others, more dignity in their over-indulgence, stop their antagonizing cave-owners, practice conservation by more than big talk. All wrote letters to Congress protesting damming Grand Canyon. Squire proposed for NSS Board of Directors, organized circulating of petitions for this. Closed bonfire.

6/17 Friday Doped around. **TOOK SHOWERS, CHANGED CLOTHES !!** Some sessions. Was alone sitting in under some Sequoias when a goose-bumpy chill came over me. When we first saw the Sequoias, they blew our minds with their hugeness, magnificence, beauty. Then we quickly became acclimated to their presence and went about our other businesses of living, socializing, et al.; enjoying the setting but also taking it for granted. All of a sudden after three days among them, I am truly overwhelmed by their presence—it is as if during everything we have done in the past six days, a huge, not-of-this-world God has been standing way up there looking down over us. These unbelievably huge, magnificent living things who have quietly and majestically lived here through two thousand years and more are not of my pitiful little world, they are beyond me, beyond my experience, beyond my understanding. It took the six days of being among them, unconscious of their impact, for them quietly to insert this feeling inside me, a religious, spiritual feeling—now it has come out and overwhelmed me. I am totally awed. I want to come back here alone someday, or perhaps with some other quiet person, and do nothing but be among these trees for a week or so. I think that would be a good thing for me. I wonder if any of the rest of us have felt these feelings.

Banquet ok, not special. Reading Grotto won nothing in the drawing. Good speech by Bill Stephenson covering past conventions. At campfire, Bismark the dachshund ran bear 60 feet up Sequoia tree. By now, we have completed the corruption and destruction of Smokey Bear Terry Gustafson, he is one with us. He feebly protests the bear baiting, downs another beer, and staggers off thru the trees, mumbling. Closed bonfire 5:30 AM despite all efforts of Laidlaw to lay us low including naps, holding empty beers, calling in trained professional drinker brother, Emmett with friend Lee Blackburn.

6/18 Saturday Checked & cleaned gear, visited around camp. Realities about bears are put into perspective. All week, a great game has been to harass the garbage bears who are constantly infiltrating the camp and trying to mess around with our stuff.

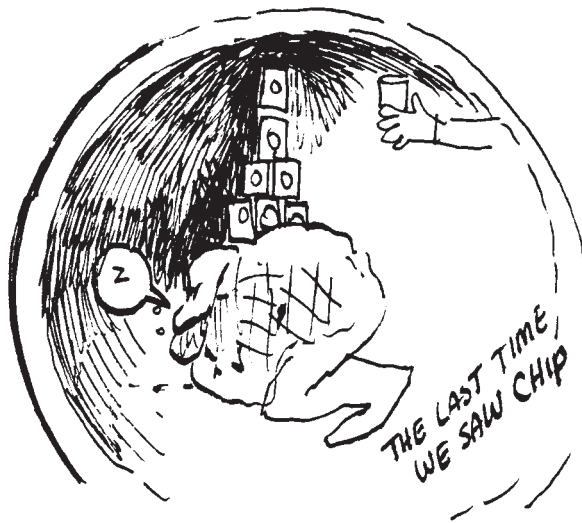




A TOUGH BEAR

These are poor, weeny, timid, moth-eaten, rather pitiful specimens whom we chase, tease, and be-devil unmercifully. We feel quite the brave machos and will brag mightily of this when we get home. Then as we are puttering around camp this afternoon, a sudden, eery silence descends; birds stop singing, trees stop rustling, all is still. Out of the woods comes the biggest, blackest, mighty humped bear ever created. He is huge, his coat shines and glistens in the sunlight, he emanates total superiority over all he surveys. He stops, checks us out once, and stomps onward in his chosen course straight through the whole camp without a word, looking neither right nor left, great claws rattling and giant lungs huffing. His contempt for us is total, neither us nor any of our pitiful stuff are worth a moment of his attention. Everyone is frozen in place, too instant-scared even to figure out whether to run or stay locked in place. If this bear wants anything, it's his and if he wants more, we'll go get it for him. Thankfully, he continues on his chosen course and dissappears into the woods. Well, there are bears and there are Bears, and we all now understand Bears in a whole new range of comprehension.

Continued our puttering, ate, napped past 8 PM. Visited more, bumming drinks, bummed more at campfire. Huge bonfire as Rick Rigg tempers knives and machetes in coals, a wild scene. Built beer can pyramids on the passed-out Chip Carney. Left early, about 2 AM.



6/19 Sunday Up 7:30 AM. Thren & Pendleton to Church Cave, Squire does work around camp. Squire to Tharp's Cabin with Biggers and Jane Learn. Bob & Joe report fine hairy drops on King's Canyon road. There has been a secret rappell down a 1000' foot cliff by Cuddington, Sarah Corry, and others. Our Coleman stove supper menu: Chunk Chicken Soup, Brisket of Beef, Parsleyless Potatoes, French String Beans, Crisp Onions Greazée, Chocalat. Bon Appetit and early to bed.

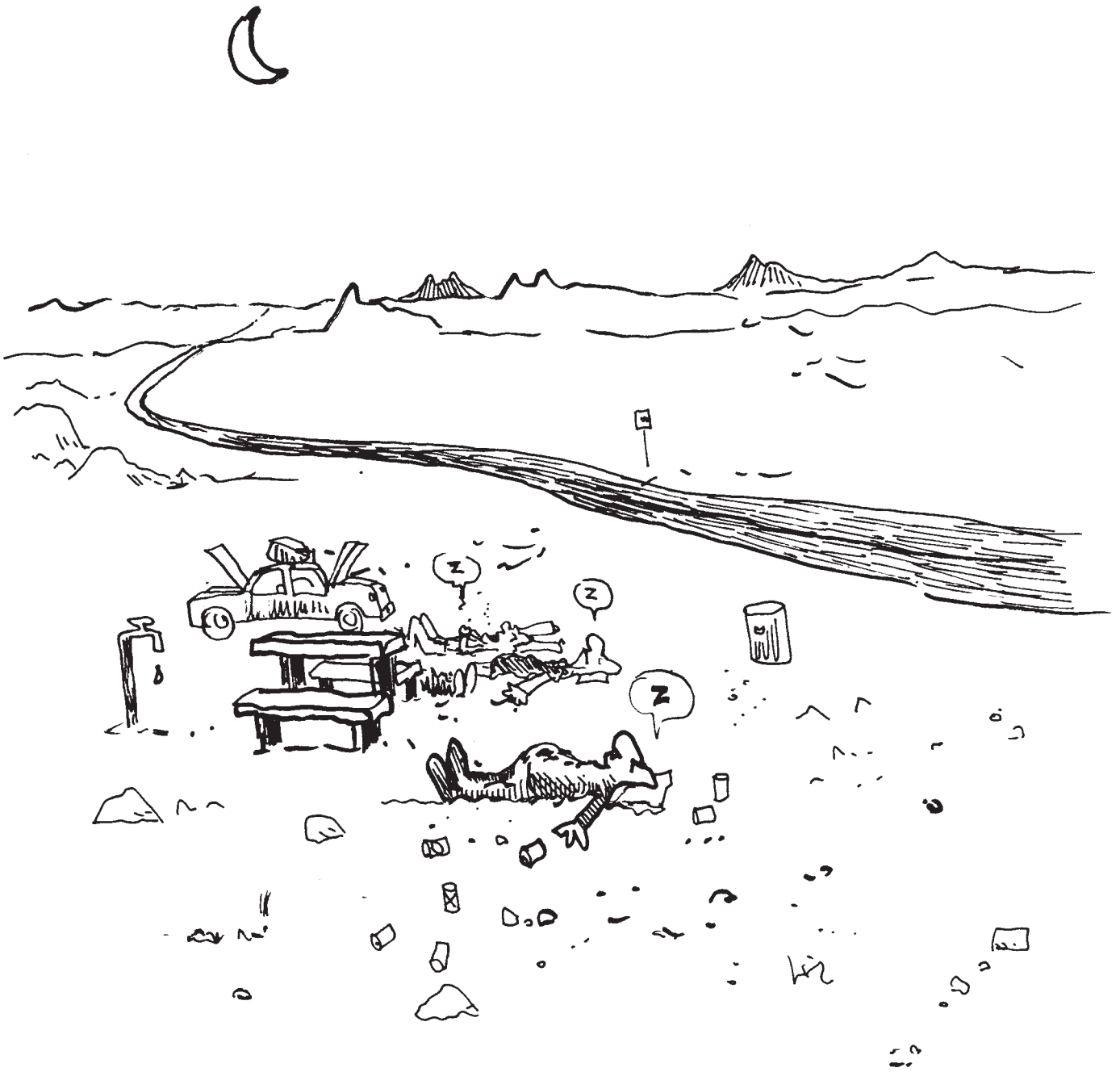
6/20 Monday Start od/45,055, Mile 4,413. Load out and leave 10 AM. At Tulare 12 noon for Joe's rope. Wait 'till 3 PM for truck outfit to show up. Do laundry. Find that they don't have rope. Locate in Fresno, head after same. On arrival, find it's lost on a truck somewhere around town. Finally found, retrace steps and head up Kern River Valley; harsh country, heavy rapids, violent granite outcroppings, every turnout despoiled by TMP (striking example that control is necessary in public places). Camp in county camp at Lake Isabel, a lousier camp site nowhere.

California > Nevada > Arizona > Texas

6/21 Tuesday Start 45,341. Steak & eggs for breakfast. Under way at 7:30 AM for Death Valley. Through Panamint Valley, most wonderfully grouty place; and into Death Valley itself, most appropriately named. Joe estimates temperature at 110 degrees, I would say considerable higher. Rooted around old Borax works, Death Valley Scotty's, other points of interest. Walked out into desert at isolated point to get the feel of it. A splendidly evil place. One stays very alert here not to mess up or make any mistakes.

On across endless Nevada deserts. Side trip to Rhyolite, old mining ghost town. Checked out vertical mine shafts—rocks seemed to fall out of hearing—these were spooky, quite narrow with creaky old weathered wood casing and no bottom, we chose not to go in—God's own caves are one thing, man's mines are quite another.

On thru more Nevada desert, arrive Las Vegas about 5 PM. All changed at gas station into our prettiest clothes, trimmed whiskers and went for a little stroll. Hit Casino section about 6 PM—the stories about free drinks while playing the slots are true !!!!! Had excellent light meal at the Las Vegas Club, then hit *all* the casinos playing mostly nickel slots and gobbling free drinks. Took in the topless Watusi show at the Mint and the topless GoGo Girl show at Diamond Jim's Nevada Club. The stories of Las Vegas shows are true. All had good runs of luck, Thren doing best, Joe and Squire fading toward the end perhaps due to unlimited free drink, but still modest winners. Joe very quickly learns to avoid roulette. The best show of all turned out to be the local girls on the dance floor in the basement of the Carousel—such a wiggling and a



VALLEY OF FIRE STATE PARK
105° at 3 a.m. AFTER
A NIGHT IN VEGAS

jouncing as would embarrass one. Despite all the free beverages, we have not the cool to join them, no doubt for the best.

Back on the road about 2:30 AM and hit the Valley of Fire (state park, if a picnic table and a water spigot qualify as a park) about 4 AM—sacked out under picnic table canopy, all happy with their pocket-fulls of jingling nickels, belly-fulls of free booze (the best kind); aroused, albeit unsurfeited, lust. It is very, very hot even at this hour.

6/22 Wednesday A bad morning indeed. Wakened about 6:30 AM by lady tourist repeatedly filling water jug by our heads combined with instant sun rapidly bringing temperature into the 200 degree range, impossible to sleep. Got up miserable, couldn't get at the water spigot due to millions of yellow jackets swarming it. Checked out Valley of Fire red sandstone formations, they are wind formed, quite fine although peak appreciation is hindered by our condition. Excellent petroglyphs abound in the area.

Most of the day spent miserably crossing Arizona and Utah desertland. Hit Zion National Park. Poked around a little, then found some shade and sacked out about an hour. On to Bryce canyon, got a campsite, then did some of the views—really fine stuff. Excellent supper of hot dogs and sauerkraut, then splendid sleep in colder high altitudes—day ends well.

(Tuesday—minus 230 feet below sea level \ - 115 degrees Fahrenheit
Wednesday—plus 8,200 feet above sea level - 33 degrees Fahrenheit).

6/23 Thursday Woke feeling great, beautiful morning, birds singing, clean sunshine, ice in the dishwater. Our Field & Stream-type neighbor has come over and given us nine fat fresh-caught mountain trout—we broiled them in butter and stuff ourselves supremely on this windfall. Then completed tour of Bryce Canyon. Bryce is a strange and most beautiful phenomenon with its wind shaped forests of massive reddish-gold stalagmites, all out in the open air.

Back on the road, made Grand Canyon about noon, hit North Rim. Did all lookout points. Thren the searcher finds cherds, prehistoric circa 700-1135 AD. Found a home, not the best campsite. This appears to be the slum area of the park, we fit in well. Annoying winds all night. Elevation 8800'.

6/24 Friday Iv. 46,333 9 AM Up early, good breakfast, corn beef hash, eggs, onions, Irish potatos. Drove to South rim, 200 miles plus. Saw views, views, views. Canyon is all incredibly magnificent, but gets old after the 78th view. Will be a fine place to get down into one day when we have time. Ruins of Indian pueblo somewhat of a dissapointment, museums excellent.

On down into Arizona. Rondezvoused with Laidlaw, Roger & Caree Brown, Karen White on schedule at Ashfork. We are accosted and investigated by suspicious cop. He knows we threaten normalcy and tranquility, but can't quite figure out what crimes we have committed or are going to commit. Laidlaw, Roger, and Caree bait him unmercifully, apparently this is considered great fun for Californios who haven't heard of the "don't make waves" maxim.

ARIZONA



He finally leaves in disgust muttering about how we “will be watched.” On to Donnie’s (Dante’s?) Descent. A second cop arrives, following our three vehicle caravan, we completely destroy his mind by driving off the highway, cross under him through a culvert, and off across the bare desert, leaving him standing on the highway, hands on hips, knowing he should be doing something about us, but not sure what.

Some time spent wandering around the trackless wilds locating the pit. Found same, built fine fire, drank Laidlaw’s beer around same, made up new prussick knots for doing pit.

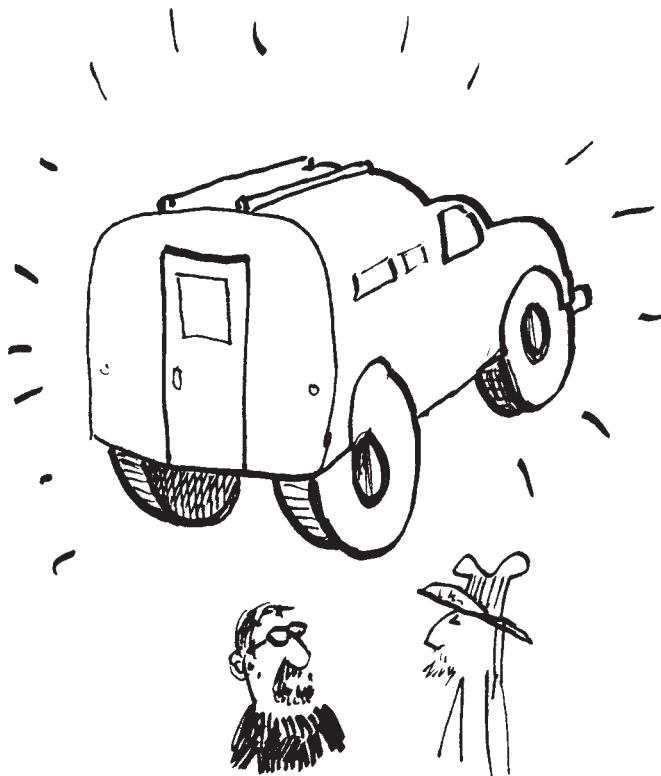
6/25 Sunday Rigged pit—Donnie’s is 256’ deep, 108’ across—sides vertical with no belling—about 50’ to 60’ of basalt cap over horizontal red limestone bedding. Joe, Thren, and Roger all in and out, all agree it to be a nasty pit. Exposure to loose fracturing rock all the way down the drop and they find operating in full daylight to be not natural. Dislodged rocks plummet down on those below as each new climber descends and exits. Joe’s new oversized aluminum beaner overheated badly first 40’, had to switch to breakbars. Loaded out about three, made it to Government Cave, a 4700’ long horizontal lava tube. Drank much beer, baited forest rangers, exchanged propaganda literature with same. All entered cave with Coleman lanterns and beer, we violate our no drinking-while-caving rule by enjoying same at rear of cave. Cave is like strolling down a picturesque sewer pipe. Some ice formations. Tubes stay 34 degrees





year round determined by ground temperature, elevation, and insulating capacity of lava. Made community stew, drank more beer, and to bed.

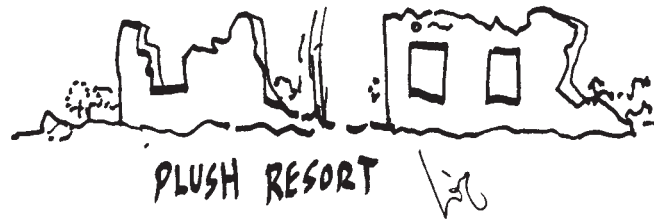
6/26 Sunday St 46,726 Got up (oh dear), and on the road about 11. Staggered around thru Williams, Ashfork, and Flagstaff; headed South thru Rimrock to Montezuma Wells, an old Indian joint with small cliff dwellings.



.... THE ULTIMATE CALIFORNIO
CAVER ASSAULT VEHICLE.. ALL
ALUMINUM... HUGE TIRES..



Trip down thru thru Oak Creek Canyon quite fine, splendid stream, pines, would love to spend some time here except for TMP. On to Montezuma's Castle—a fine cliff dwelling with excellent museum; skulls, mummies, other great artifacts. The dry climate preserves sandals, baskets, weavings we don't often see. Headed into mountains at Camp Verde on dirt goat trail over many miles of high mountains, desert, dryness, dust, and heat. Many blooming



Agavis, a blooming-every-six-years century plant. Finally down to Verde Hot Springs, a completely wild and isolated area with the only water in the area, the Verde River (stream). Goat trail ends at the river, our sedan is lagging behind and we round the final curve to hilarious scene of Kenny's truck in the middle of the stream with them all walloring in the water on their honky chairs, clothes and all with beers raised on high. We join them, such heaven after the hours of heat, stress, and dust. Body surfed down the river and came upon an old hermit who invited us all to the hot mineral baths at the old burnt out and completely gutted hotel at the hot springs. The stone walls, cement floor, and a fine fireplace remain. At age 74, Old Man Clemons lives there year round with one roofed-over cupboard as a kitchen and a small cave by the spring for his bedroom. The small old masonry bath house from resort days survives over the hot springs and we all wallor in the springs and bath with beers and made quite a scene, an unbeleivable sight. Old Man Clemons is enjoying our beer and the girls' lack of clothes all the while, talking without cease. Thren, Joe, and I are also enjoying this new-to-us trend in community bathing habits, trying to be cool with the sudden shedding of carried-over Northeastern standards of decorum and modesty.

Hotel had been built in 1921, burned and abandoned in 1962. To get the vehicles to the hotel, we tried fording the creek at two different places, the Rambler and the VW are unable to make the washed-out road, so loaded the sleeping and eating stuff into the 4 wheel. Then it couldn't make it front-wise, so Ken backed it up over wash-out area and made it on to the hotel. Set up camp in the main room, boozed up and extreme good fellowshipped with Old Man Clemons. More beer, son-of-a-bitch stew. More baths, then bedded down, quite well pleased with ourselves.

6/26 Monday Old Man Clemons insists on raiding his pantry and treats us all to a big bacon & egg breakfast. We all hit the baths for a final soak. Old Man has informed us there are seventeen different minerals and other good stuff in the water which account

for his marvelous state of preservation (and marathon ability to talk ??), we have surely by now absorbed enough to last a long time. Hopefully the water is not too badly polluted by what it has in return absorbed from us. We load out and leave. Went out a different way that Old Man says is shorter; it turns out higher, steeper, rougher, and more hairy enough that we don't much notice about the shorter. Made temporary repairs to the Rambler's badly bruised muffler, tail pipe, torn-off stabilizer, and our gas tank which is now is two or three gallons smaller. On through Strawberry. Continued to Scout Cave. Fine entranceway with nothing but crawl thereafter. Laidlaw, Karen, Caree, Thren only ones to make test crawl. Laidlaw, Karen, Thren explore past this, apparently it is all just crawl and misery.



On to Lazy J Ranch, friends of Caree. West of Payson; way, way back dirt roads through miles and miles of nothing into the Arizona desert boonies. Then nobody home. We all drink beer in front of the house till dark, then Jim, the owner/friend, shows up and more beer is in order. He is classic, extreme stereotype, weathered, desert, old cowboy/rancher/coot. The ranch is battered, old, a mess, wonderful. Jim apparently is a bachelor, there is no sign of others around (including cattle ??). All the old desert geezers around here start talking the minute a warm body appears and apparently never stop till it disappears from sight. Thank God they are fascinating tale-tellers, warm, friendly, intelligent, interesting, extremely hospitable, and altogether a marvelous privilege to get to know. We all have fine showers with soap in the guest

house and continue with beer until Jim's giant steaks, fried potatoes and onions with huge ranch bisquits are served about 1 AM. And to bed who knows when.

6/28 Tuesday Up and to a canyon cliff right below the ranch house to see ruins of an Indian observatory. Country-side is all Arizona sandstone (limestone ?) red stuff. We climb the horizontally stratified cliff to the rim cap amid serious warnings to watch out for rattlesnakes which abound in the cliff crevices, particularly at this time of day. Those of us not brought up with rattlesnakes as part of our everyday life have some uncertainties about climbing procedures. Do you reach above you for a handhold in the crevices, letting your hand find out if it's a rattlesnake's sun deck; or do you raise up your head to look, sticking your nose into the crevice to see if the handhold's occupied ?? A new dimension to climbing for us. Anyway, we never did find out; there must have been a big snake party the night before and they were all still crashed or something—some report suspicious buzzing, but top was reached without incident and our Ranger Rick snake bite kit went untried again.

Ruins were impressive but barren—no room among the rocks for digging or relic hunting without destruction. Great view, Indians know how to pick a site. Found five metate holes on one large cap rock, small plain potsherds, chert point chips, and one small obsidian fragment. Jim speaks of a completely new ruin he found four miles up the canyon while chasing calves—sadly, we have no time to investigate. Back down the cliff with snakes still not up and return to the ranch house.



Jim starts the breakfast bisquits and home-cured slab bacon and it emerges that he has a major egg problem with more being produced than he can use. He starts frying up dozens of them, keeping large platters-full in front of us at all times with urgers to help him out by eating them. We cannot let Jim down, so all stuff down in excess of six or seven bacon-grease eggs each, sopped up with the huge, incredibly good bisquits. Then stagger to the vehicles and flee before we are totally destroyed by cowboy hospitality.



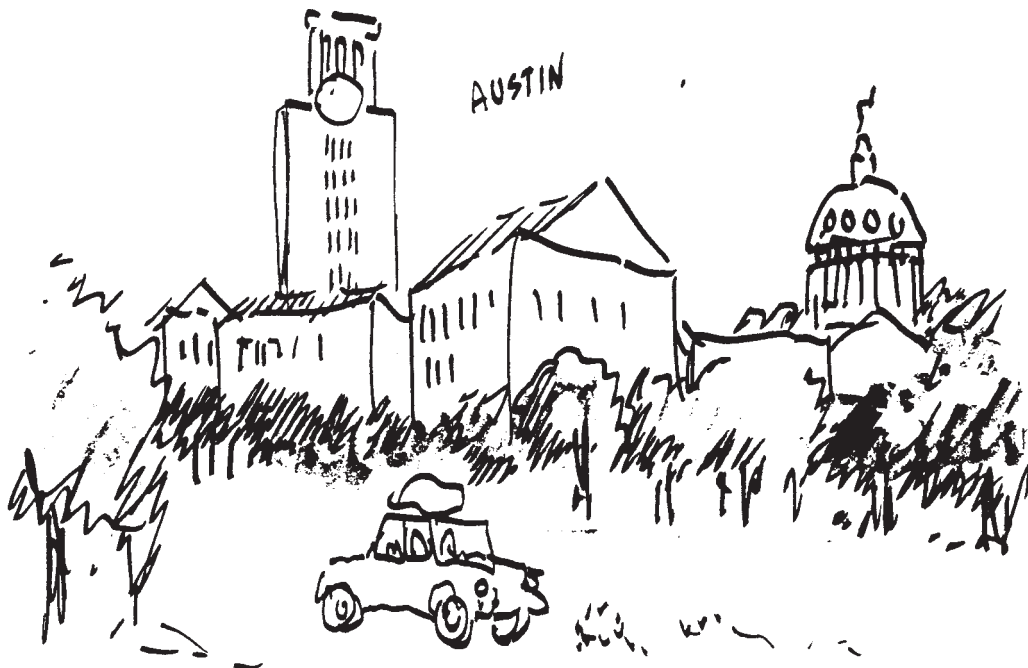
Back out the long red dust way. Finally made it to Phoenix with the temperature at 109 degrees. Drank several gallons of garbage-ade apiece. Split with the others in Phoenix, they will rejoin us in Austin. On across deserts and mountains, camp along roadway.

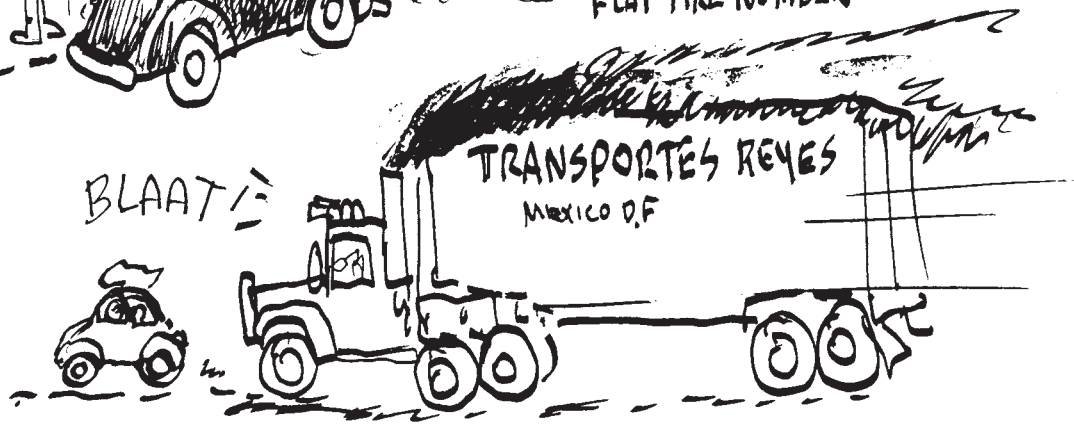
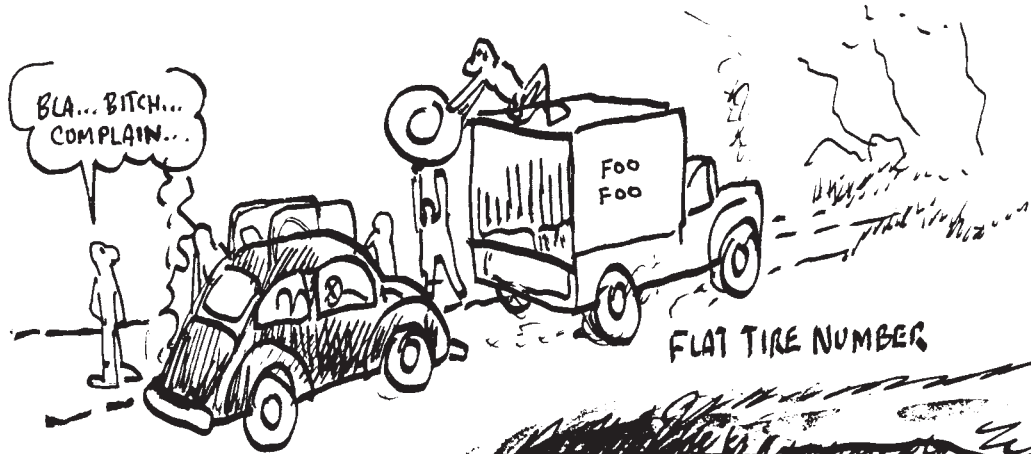
6/29 Wednesday Continue on to Carlsbad, New Mexico. Did cave, quite large—intensively decorated lower levels. Restaurant at the bottom of the cave rips us off, one pitiful thin slice of ham makes up the double priced, stale sandwich—we knew better; but,

I guess, had to learn the lesson again. Bat flight at 7 PM not particularly spectacular. Enjoyed watching the various Touri specimens at play, both beautiful and grotesque. Ate at reasonable good downtown cafe, slept in the municipal campground which looked awful and bare, but turned out OK, a pleasant and friendly place.

Texas > Xilitla/Tlamaya

6/30 Thursday Pushed on thru West Texas, Davis Mountains, Alpine, sage brush to Sonora—did cave, still the most incredibly delicate helictite heaven. Saw some black stuff and muskiness in one of the prettiest sections, has to be sewage seepage. Also seems to be some extensive drying out and decay that Bob and I don't remember from 1964. Is this ultimate jewel being destroyed so the masses can see it for a few years ? For reasons we don't know, a guy is walking up and down in the parking lot playing the bagpipes. On thru to Texas hill country, camped Blanco State Campground South of Johnson City. Lousy stew, apparently used too much boullion in sauce causing excessive saltiness.

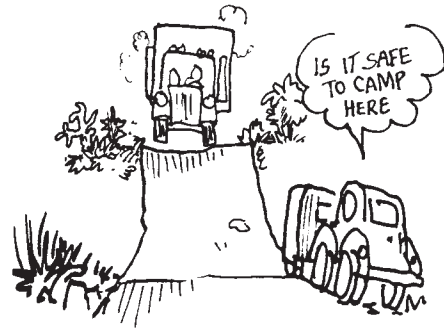
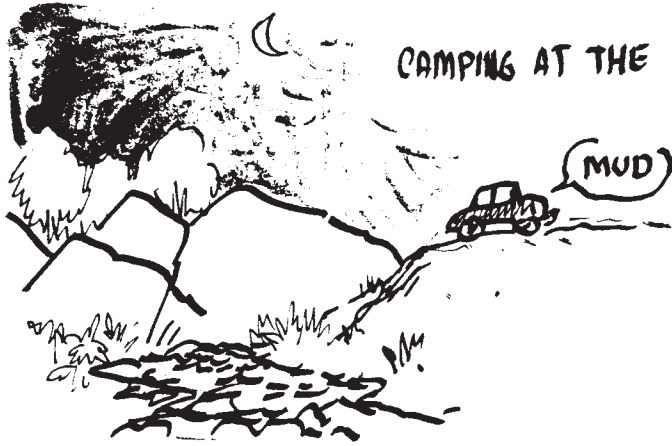




7/1 Friday On into Austin arrive 10 AM, to Raines's, 604 West 30th. Did laundry. Rebuilt carburetor, had tail pipe fixed, grease job, changed oil, gassed up, and restock food boxes. Met with Terry Raines, Roonie Burnette, Frieda Miller. Blumenstein is there with Stan, Sam and Diane Young from Utah. Laidlaw, the Browns and Rick Rigg do not show up so took off for Mexico about 10:30 PM after enjoying watermelon and beer in the street for some hours. Lew Bicking joins us in the Rambler. To Laredo, helped some helpless, hilarious drunks along the way change their tire. Hit Mexican Immigration about 3:30 AM, we have scheduled ourselves into the damndest mess imaginable—all the braceros have the 4th of July off and are going home.

7/2 Saturday odometer 48,520, mile 7,878, day 30. All thru customs by 9:30 AM without serious injury, jailing, or incident despite incredible mob scene. Like sardines in a can quite literally applies all this long time. Mexican rules and cultural customs for standing in line have not been well defined in Sanborn's Travelog. It starts by everyone playing musical chairs on rows of benches until all the participants get there. Then when the room is filled elbow to elbow with Jolly Amigos, everyone rushes the barriers en masse. At this point, a sorting process begins whereby they squeeze their shoulder in front of the guy next to them and flip it backwards, passing him to the Amigo behind who repeats the process and etcetera. Pretty soon all the polite folk are neatly sorted to the back of the room where the attendants can discuss terms with them. Neither our budget or mentality allows for this sort of tips so we must learn the push, shove, and squeeze game. Barriers are smashed and office glass broken, but we finally all made it thru. Earlier ones enjoyed coffee in Nuevo Laredo waiting for all to make it. On to Monterrey—all had Cabrito Tacos and Tres Equis Beer. Headed for the banks to get some money changed, of course they were closed. We are across the street, watching our ladies return from shopping. They are in style with USA times, beautiful in tight tee shirts, but the Mexican men are not ready for this. 100% of the foot traffic stops, turns, and admires them as they pass. Then they make a mad dash, running across the street and all cars, trucks, bicycles, and push carts screech to a halt to honor their passing. For a brief moment, we have immobilized Monterrey. They are beautiful. Finally changed a little money in an East Indian store, bought cigarros. Met a guy who has a cave he wants us to see on his place near Monterrey, but we must continue. Monterrey Saturday traffic is outrageous. Blumenstein is being a Philadelphia tourist at every opportunity, as we feebly tried to be cool and unobtrusive. We drop Frieda and her friend off at the bus station,

CAMPING AT THE NACIMIENTO PROVES IMPOSSIBLE



WE BUY HATS

WE DISCOVER MEXICAN BEER IS VERY GOOD AND CHEAP



don't know where they're going. Continue on to Ciudad Mante, went to a great, real-folks market. Bought sombreros and had fantastically good steamed corn with red pepper stuff on it, cooked in an old wash tub, washed down with home-made limonada.

Headed on and back the dirt road to spent the night at the resurgence of the Rio Mante, couldn't get through, the road is mired out several miles back. Camped along the main road at Cueva del Abra. Hot, muggy, serious mosquitos, beautiful full moon.

7/3 Sunday Laidlaw with Rick Rigg pull in about 4 AM—we missed them by about a 1/2 hour in Austin. They cleared immigration in about the same amount of time but apparently a much improved mob scene. Roger and Caree Brown called their home from Austin and found orders had come to report to their Peace Corps assignment July 5th, so back to California for them. Got up, made breakfast, harassed Tourists who kept stopping to see what we were, and on the way. Terry has truck tires fixed in Ciudad Valles, swaps 55 gallon steel drum for all labor & repairs. All enjoy coke, cerveza, and the Mexican back alley garage scene. The main worker on the big army 4 x 4 tires seems to be an eight year old muchacho while the proprietor spends most of the time drinking beer with us.

Our caravan now consists of:

The Rambler Sedan: Thren, Squire, Pendleton
Raines's Texas Pickup: Raines, Roonie, Sam & Diane Young
The Laidlaw Super Pickup: Ken, Rick Rigg, Lew Bicking
Philadelphia VW Bug: Blumenstein, Stan the Limey.

On thru Valles and wind into semi-tropical stuff to Huichihuayan turnoff. Surprise, the old rope-strung, man-powered ferry across the Rio Huichihuayan is gone, replaced by a bridge and a new road to Xilitla opened. Up the instant altitude jump (about 2200 feet in 2 miles ?) to where the new road winds along the cliffside into Xilitla. It is wider, now at least two vehicle widths, but the exposure seems higher, a beautiful view. I miss the security of the vehicle being locked into the two deep tire ruts of the old road. The new excavation and fill is adjusting itself, there are numerous big bites collapsed out on the falling-off side, and boulders and rocks fallen and falling down on the roadway from the cliff-side. We speculate on where and when the next will drop beneath us or crash down from above.

Roonie is riding standing up on Terry's rear bumper to enjoy the view and halfway to Xilitla at the Arroyo Seco, he falls off at about 25 mph. Bad slashes on left elbow and knee, through the hide; but not critical; minor abrasions on back and hip. Extreme damage to right knee—right angle flaps torn about two inches long on each side, clean to the bone joint. Cuts are deep through up to 2 inches of meat. Turns livid, passes out and starts into deep shock with convulsion symptoms, but we are able to turn this around and revive him successfully. BFI'ed and rough covered the wounds without attempting to clean and bee-lined it to Xilitla. Normal shock insulates the pain, Roonie regains color, makes the ride clear-headed and without excessive strain. Market day in Xilitla and the streets are mobbed. Located clinica on the square and went to work immediately. Conditions unbelievably primitive, a real insight, but a rough way to learn about them. The boy-doctor is probably a medical student, someone says that they send them alone to the small villages to serve a sort of learn-by-doing apprentice/internship. Whatever; we are thankful to find him. Clinic is a dingy adobe room on the town square, no lights, a gallon jug of sterilized water, no drugs other than a local anesthetic. The instruments are taken out by an old Indian woman into the market square where she finds someone with hot water, boils them and brings them back. Squire serves as doctor's assistant, we clean out as much stones, gravel, and rocks as we can find, and Roonie is sewed up and bandaged with much teeth-gritting and pain. All dine out, eating at Restaurante Xochitl across the square. Roonie is quite a sight unshaven, pants cut off above the knees, all appendages decorated with bandages and blood.

Up and out the two rut road to Tlamaya and made camp on the coffee bean drying yard at Rancho de Huitzmolotitla. Meet new manager, Ismael Larios, who extends us free run of the place. Our old friend and patrón, Sr. Modesto Gomez, has driven his pickup off a cliff, Descanzó en Paz, Sr. Gomez, we will miss you. Beer and to bed.

7/4 Monday Happy 4th of July. Joe, Thren, Terry, Bloomer, Sam, Diane, Rick to rig Sótano de Tlamaya. Our project is to redo the lost survey of the final section. Squire, Lew, and Stan to surface survey, but Roonie in much pain and a bad night behind him. His color is bad, livid; and although he protests he will be OK, it is obvious he is not. Lacerations don't look good. Pain pills the doctor gave him are of no value, probably just aspirin. Someone must make the decision so I do. The Rambler will be the fastest and best vehicle, so we strip it of its huge overload and Squire and



Roonie set out to make the run to the border, depart 10:30 AM. Roonie's brave front breaks down immediately on leaving camp, but I must concentrate on the road. It is a bad run down the mountain, but he keeps a semblance of control despite extreme agony, grimacing, and groaning. The Rambler, of course, does not clear the high center strip between the two ruts of the road so must drive with one tire cocked up on the grassy center strip and one on the narrow grassy shoulder. It is drizzling and this is a slippery proposition. Along the high, hairy part of the road, we are proceeding downhill in this fashion, thank God on the inside rut and the Rambler slips off the grassy crowns, one side into the water-filled ditch, hung up on the shoulder by the under carriage and against the embankment. Checking the scene, we have one shot. I floor it, the undercarriage slides along the thick, slippery grass shoulder and when enough speed is built up, flip the front wheels, and the Rambler heaves itself back on the road, almost but not quite throwing itself over the opposite cliffside. Proceed thru Xilitla and on down to the Pan Am highway. Finally make Valles by noon, but have extreme difficulty getting directions to a clinic or doctor, I have few Spanish words other than how to order beer or huevos revueltos con chorizo and no comprehension at all when spoken to. I am sent to the Goodrich Tire store because the owner there speaks English. He does speak perfect English and I tell him our urgent need for a doctor. He asks if I am going to buy a tire and when I say no, he refuses to speak more English, sends a flunky outside to get a policeman who throws me out of the place. We finally find someone who directs us to a Medico's house who leads us to his little clinica where we at last get a proper shot into Roonie, a decent dressing, and some mysterious pain pills which later turn out to be very fine indeed. With Roonie's agony abated; get gas and some money changed, have flat fixed (not at Goodrich store), and make it up the road by 3 PM.

[Memo: In Ciudad Valles, Doctor's house is the house on the left side of the Café Athens which is on the left going north into the center of town. Competent and reasonably well equipped, excellent pain pills).

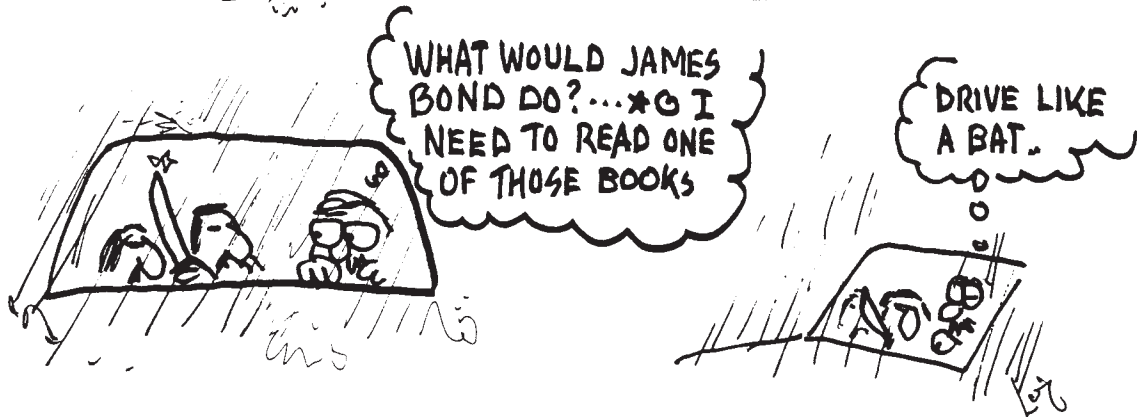
In Ciudad Mante, manage to get a call thru to Sue Emory in Austin who will meet us at the fourteen mile check point below Nuevo Laredo. Roonie's color now good again and he is able to relax and sleep a little, there is no fever. With him sleeping, I floor it and make miles. At Monterrey we eat at excellent sidewalk restaurante. Bifstek Ranchero and Tres Equis obscuro con limón.

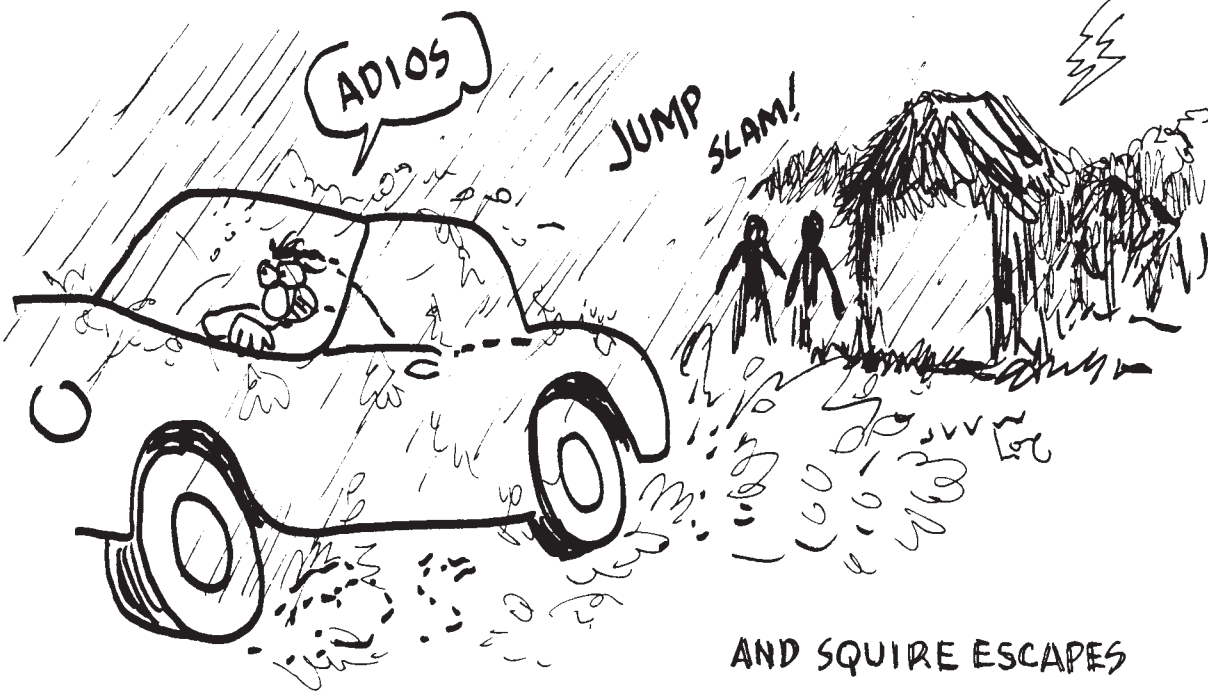


We discover that we have left his and my tourist papers and all the car permits and registrations in Tlamaya. Although Roonie is in great shape thanks to the super-pills from Mante, we cook up a scenario to distract and befuddle the guards and get him cleared and on the way to U.S. without hassles over missing papers. We make it to the Checkpoint and see Sue with Dennis Barrett and Sustare waiting on the north side of the guardhouse. We park on the south side, I solicitously lift Roonie from the car, still unshaven in his raggedy, bloody cut-off clothes with bandages flapping everywhere. With great histrionics, him hanging over my shoulders, mightily grimacing with pain amidst loud groans and moans; we hobble and drag him straight past the guards and load him in the back of the waiting car. I urgently whisper to Sue to split, fast, no questions, and they do. I dodge back across the line without a word to the dumbfounded guards, move the car back amongst some trucks parked below the station and settle down, totally exhausted, to nap a little. Two guards come down, get me out of the car, and start making hostile noises about documentos and pointing toward the vanished Roonie. I proceed to tell them, in Spanish, the entire history of caving in Mexico, our trip, the California convention, Sotano de Tlamaya, Roonie's accident, the Goodrich man, etc, etc, etc. After about ten minutes, they throw up their hands in disgust and skulk back to the guardhouse, mumbling all the way. Praise the Lord, they forgot to ask about the car papers. Best for me to get out of sight; I split down the road about ten miles, hide the car back behind some cacti and sack out.

7/5 Tuesday Up at 6 AM and make it down to Monterrey—breakfast on Huevos Rancheros, buy clean shirt. Getting the broken car glass fixed is an adventure including learning all the words about glass fixing. The first place doesn't have or can't or something, but gives me a guide to take me where they can. After a wild ride clean across town, we accomplish our mission. Returned guide and headed down the road.

Picked up two hitch-hikers South of Montemorelos—Morro and Lupe, obviously street kids from Monterrey, about 17. They are headed for Mexico City and appear to be either runaways or fleeing justice. Have a good time the next 200 odd miles talking Spanish and English, but after leaving Mante with approaching darkness, it became very apparent by their changed attitudes, actions, nervousness, and things they are whispering to each other in Spanish that they meant to have the car and my dough after dark. We are all in the front seat. Morro is next to me with his arms up on the back of the seat and I see in the rear view mirror that he has





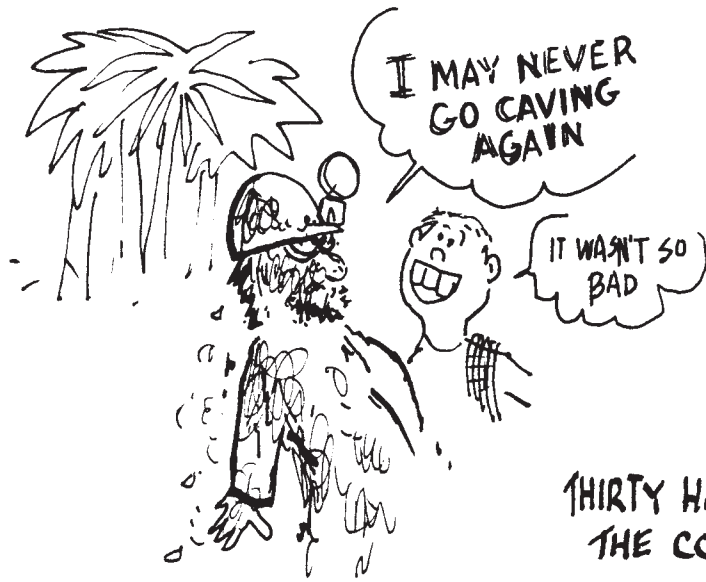
a closed clasp knife in one hand. I become uneasy about all this. It is now dark, raining, and we are in complete, scary jungle isolation; no villages, no shacks, no traffic, no lights, no nothing. Was able to keep them talking and floored the car, faster than possible through the rainy, winding road; figuring they wouldn't dare attack me at high, dangerous speed. Kept talking all the while. Now, with the driving, I obviously had them scared to death and distracted. Finally at Huichihuayán, there is a small cluster of thatched umbrella shelters with people having a little mini-market by the roadside. I whipped in front of a refresco stand into the midst of a bunch of people, grabbed the keys, jumped out and to the rear of the car. Got them out of the car, leaped back in with an abrupt goodbye, and proceeded on to the Xilitla turn-off. Good for me they were amateurs.

I was most surely going to want to enjoy some beers when I got to camp and, just as surely, my comrades would have consumed all there was, so went to the square in Xilitla to see if I could get some. In the dark, soft rain, the black, wet-glistening square; deserted except for mysterious, huddled figures in the doorways; is easily the spookiest place I've ever inserted myself into; I am transported back to a alien, medieval Twilight Zone. But a dim light is on in the cantina; I accomplish my goal, two cases worth, and out the Tlamaya road in the rain and dark. Home safe without incident. Bob and Joe are sleeping, the others missing. After about two beers, they show up—had been to Tlamaya night-clubbing.. Talked awhile and to bed. 1,095 miles and a busy thirty four hours.

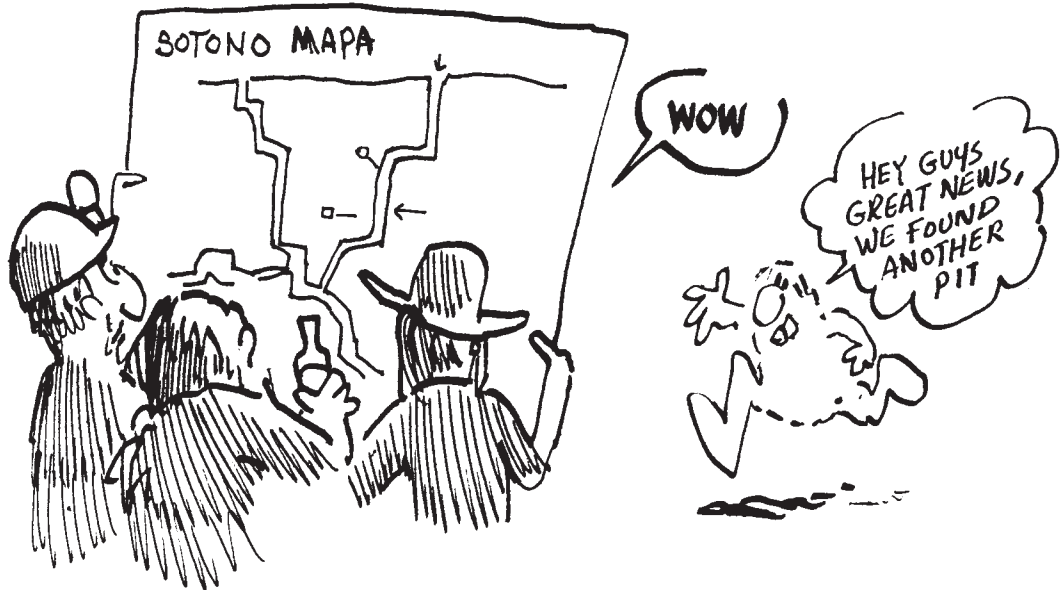
7/5 Tuesday #2 Meanwhile, back home at Tlamaya.... In the two days, I was gone, Terry, Bob, Joe, and Rick Rigg have completed Tlamaya survey to the bottom. Report a rough, wet, cold, fatiguing 35 +/- hours in the hole.

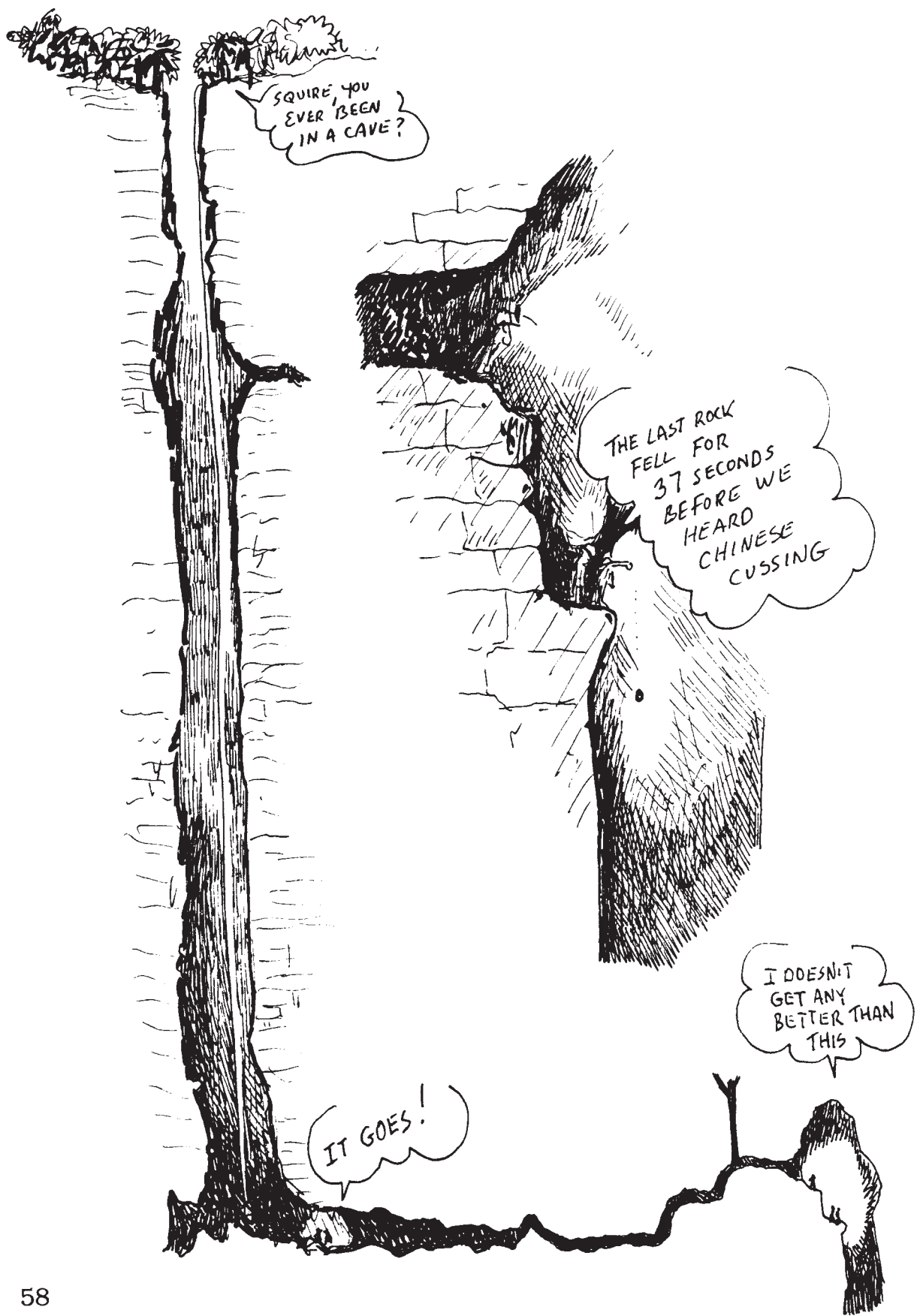
7/6 Wednesday Up, good breakfast and down to Sótano de Tlamaya to retrieve rope and gear from the pit. Bob and Terry go in with Stan, and Lew to help. Retrieve lower riggings without incident until Stan, a complete novice, swings over to a ledge halfway up, unrigs, and lets go the rope which swings to the center of the pit. Lew is unable to swing over to him and a disgusted Bob must re-enter a second time to rescue him. Even then he refuses to get back on the rope till threatened with harm and abandonment. Rest of us enjoy beers in Tlamaya while waiting. Tlamaya is the end-of-the road Huastec Indian village of about twenty or thirty thatched houses made of sticks with the major business a refresco/cerveza stand that stocks about a case of beer, a case of





THIRTY HOURS PLUS IN
THE COLD WET...





SQUIRE, YOU
EVER BEEN
IN A CAVE?

THE LAST ROCK
FELL FOR
37 SECONDS
BEFORE WE
HEARD
CHINESE
CUSSING

IT GOES!

I DOESN'T
GET ANY
BETTER THAN
THIS

nasty bright orange or red soft drink, chicles, and maybe two or three packs of Delicados. They make frequent extra beer runs to Xilitla when we are in town. All out of the pit by 7 PM, home, supper, and to bed.



7/6 Wednesday To Xilitla, go to post office and huarache-makers—he draws outlines of our big gringo feet and will have our orders ready in two days. Generally shop and root around. Buy beer and get breakfast at Restaurante Xochitl, carne asada and frijoles. Down the road to Cueva de Salitre and into same. Most magnificent entrance, 100' high, 200' wide, very impressive, beautiful. But not much cave beyond. Terry and Lew do first 150' drop, survey, and make second drop into another huge room, complete survey of cave. Waiting back at the road, Squire, Ken, and Stan cross the Arroyo Seco to check a hole on the other side of same, is a small natural bridge, no cave or sotano. But had a fine hike through the weeds with a bath in the river on way. We learn about Malamujer which translates as “Bad Woman.” It is a tall, green thing with thistle-type thorns all over the stems and leaves. The slightest brush against it stings like bloody hell and won't quit. Apparently a good dose will paralyze the stung part for weeks and worse. The remedy is to pee immediately on the afflicted area. If you can't reach it, get a friend to help you. It works. We return to Tlamaya, Terry trying to sell his extra tires. While drinking beer at the grocery stand, a guy, Antonio, tells us of sótanos on a rancho his father owns or manages, Rancho de Suchallo—arrange to meet him tomorrow and home to bed.



7/7 Thursday Terry, Ken, Bob, Squire, Lew meet Antonio at 8 AM, head to his place through the jungle. Warns us to watch out on the path as well as above us in the trees for “cuatros narices”; we call them Fer-de-Lances, large, black, particularly nasty, deadly pit vipers which he says abound here and are a special problem. Called “four noses” for the deep depressions at their poison sacs which resemble a second set of nostrils. He says there is no cure, you die in minutes, poison goes straight to the nerve centers, paralyzes and stops your lungs and heart. Dangerous because it’s one of the few snakes that charges towards and attacks anything that comes by. Antonio says watch the trees overhead too, it will also attack by dropping on you from above....Cheez !!!!!!! Shows us five sótanos, two caves, says there are other sótanos around. Joe and Sam show up halfway along. Back to Tlamaya and drink beer at the Stop and Go rest of the day. Antonio’s wife across the way much disturbed, appears at their doorway every fifteen minutes to mean-eye him.

7/8 Friday Hauled gear to the new finds. Ken, Joe, and Stan survey road from Huitzmolotitla to Rancho de Suchallo. Caving crew is Terry, Bob, Blumer, Lew, Rick, Squire.

1st Sótano—Terry 205'
 2nd “—Blumer 116'
 3rd “—Bob 196'
 4th “—Rick 216'

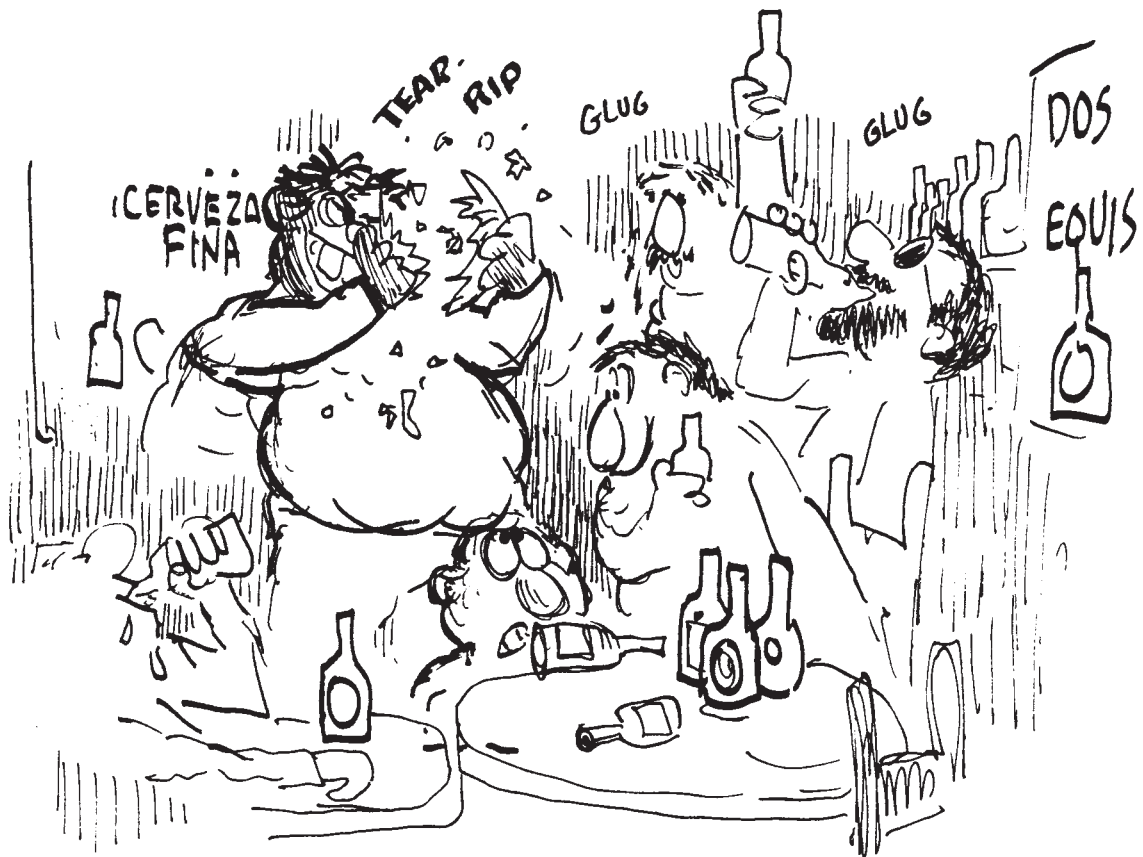




Rick nearly killed. Rigged Rigg's rope laying over log at the lip—when he was halfway out on prussik, log broke in half where the rope passed over, sending a section about 12" diameter x 8' long plummeting down at him with sundry debris and lip cave-in. No way it could have missed him. Dead silence for the longest minute after the horrendous crash and no response to our first calls. But he had escaped all but a heavy shower of debris. The pit just wasn't very big around and the log, which had fallen about a hundred feet by the time it reached him, had to have followed the path of the rope and missed him by inches. The remaining 10' section of the log teetered on the crumbly edge, we belayed same as best we could, was touch and go till he got out and past it. Home, beers, community stew and to bed.



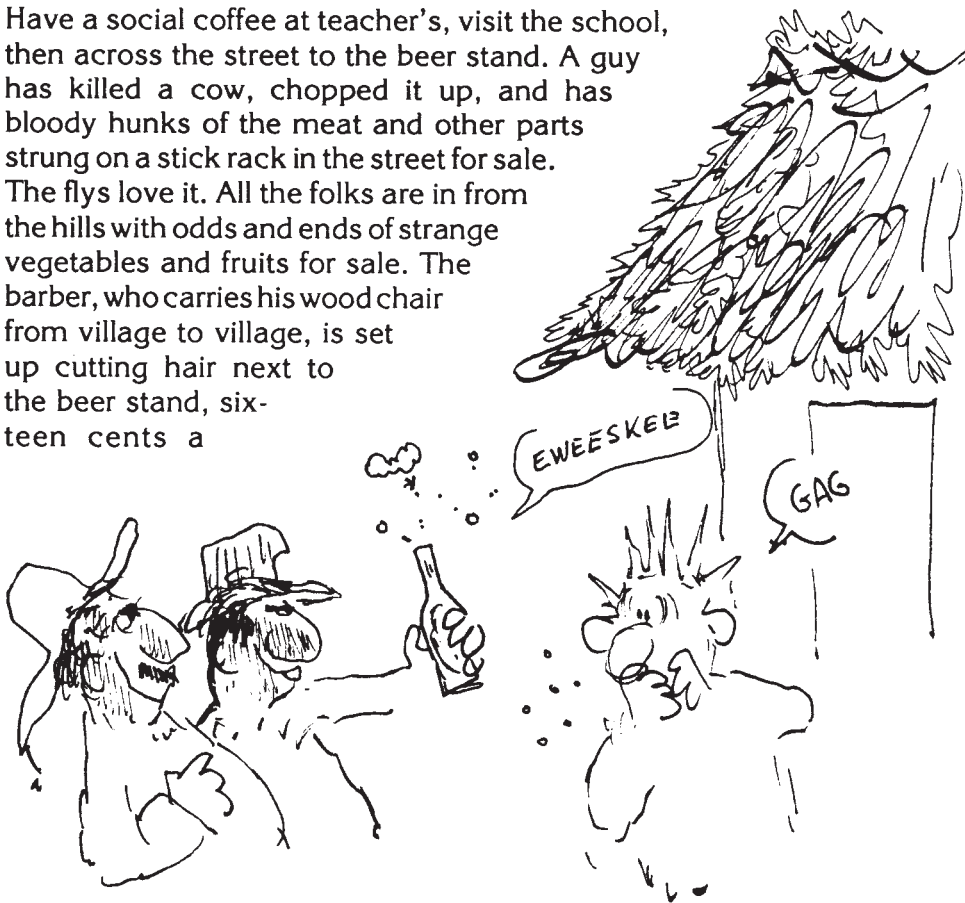
7/9 Saturday Terry splits in AM with Sam and Diane for Austin. Rest to Xilitla, enjoyed huevos con chorizo. Picked up huaraches, now the painfull breaking-in process. Xilitla huaraches do not break in to fit your feet, your feet break in to fit them. But then you have a handsome, comfortable, distinctive set of footwear suitable for all occassions that last a minimum ten or fifteen years. Ken and Joe have Wingeros made, the hook-shaped machetes that are permanently attached to the right hand of every male over five in the area. These are made to order by the blacksmith heating an old broken truck spring till it's white hot and wanging it into shape. He tempers it and grinds on an edge. Then you have a wingero. Questions of who sells the wooden handles for them don't compute to him at all—imagine a dummy who can't whittle out their own personalized handle !!! Got five cases of beer and juiced it up at the Cantina. Got acquainted with Gordo, the proprietor, and other bon vivants, one of whom turns out to be the schoolteacher from Tlamaya. Gordo attacks and tears Blumenstein's wretched hat. A grand time had by all. Then back to Tlamaya with the teacher.



Tlamaya Olympics



Have a social coffee at teacher's, visit the school, then across the street to the beer stand. A guy has killed a cow, chopped it up, and has bloody hunks of the meat and other parts strung on a stick rack in the street for sale. The flies love it. All the folks are in from the hills with odds and ends of strange vegetables and fruits for sale. The barber, who carries his wood chair from village to village, is set up cutting hair next to the beer stand, sixteen cents a



pop. A roaring time is had by all with most of the town in attendance. Laidlaw inaugurates the First Annual Tlamaya Olympics, taking on all comers, both us and the locals, with his various hopping, jumping, distortion, and dexterity tricks, much competition and hilarity. Two drunks share with us their coke bottle full of "eweesky," a semi-translucent, murky beverage too foul and evil to be just plain grain alcohol, has to be the local 180 proof raw sugar cane moonshine. A lady is grilling little strips of the dead cow over charcoal, dusted with suspicious red powder, absolutely delicious. Joe, Bob, and Ken get their hair cut. Blumenstein's offensive hat is sent to the roof of the bar where it remains. Under a bright full moon, we depart amidst much goodwill from the surviving residents. Up the road, discover that we have forgotten Thren, last seen fondly believing he was making time with the sexy bar maid. Rush back, he is still there, happily simpering away in response to her flirtations, held up only by an arm locked around a counter post with a couple of local boys mean-eying him. Must be forcibly and bodily carried to and thrown into the back of the





truck amidst vigorous protestations. Home and all happily to bed after a full day.

7/10 Sunday Blumenstein and Stan leave in AM. All loaf around camp all day. The Lord's day, a day of rest. Reading, writing, generally being worthless. We capture one of the huge black Rhinoceros beetles. Our friends, the little kids bring us two arrangements of flowers, as beautifully put together as any professional job. After threatening all week, the tarp-tent finally collapses on all who are siesta-ing underneath. Rebuilt same and returned to state of catatonic bliss.

7/11 Monday Ditto—another day of sloth on the patio. Ricardo brings us another flower arrangement. Highlight of the day is Lew Bicking's encounter with the dog. Lew's only traveling and survival equipment consists of a small keltie pack whose sole contents are the largest Spanish dictionary ever printed, about a

twenty pounder, and a box of Mexican crackers. Lew disgraces even us, his only clothes are those he wears and he obviously has some warped goal of not taking them off, ever, for washing or any other purpose. His unshaven beard neither progresses or thickens, merely scraggles more obscenely each day. With his crushed, greasy straw hat, round spectacles, and beak of a nose, he resembles an emaciated, raggedy, comic stork; wholly preoccupied with his giant dictionary. We are aroused from our lazy, mid-afternoon siesta and peaceful apathy by the awful scene of this apparition charging across the patio in hot pursuit of one of the local cur dogs, screaming at the top of his lungs, “¿Perro, dónde está mis tostados?” It remains unrecorded whether the pilfered tostados were ever recovered.

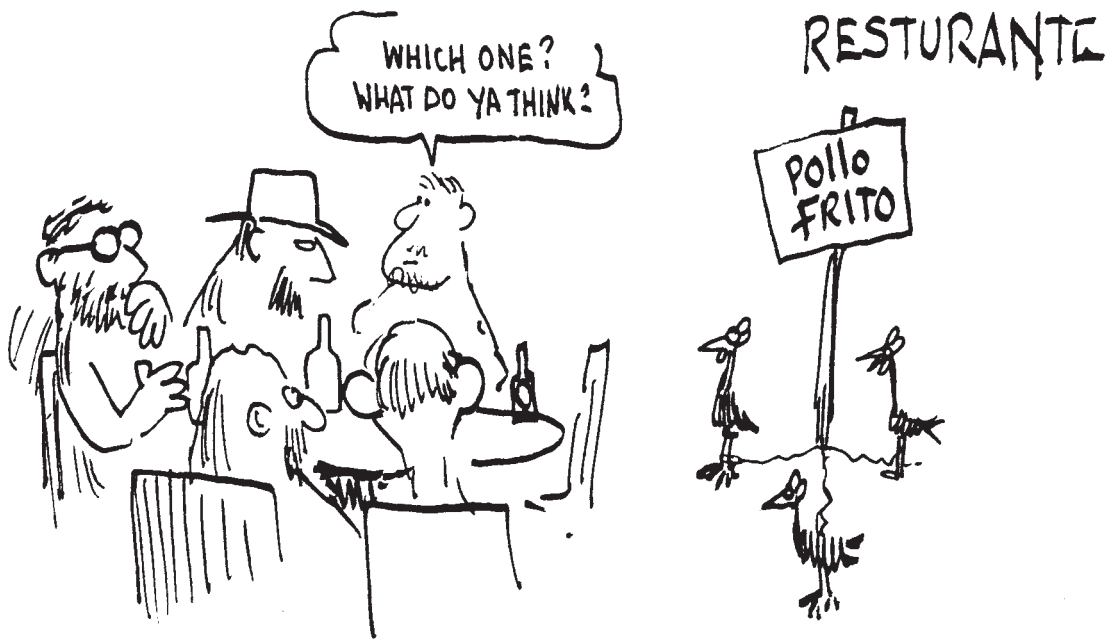
7/12 Tuesday Up and break camp. Gang surveys road from Rancho de Huitzmolotitla to Cueva de Tlamaya entrance. Back to camp and load out. Off to Antonio’s ranch to complete pits and survey. Ken and Joe surface survey, tying in all holes and caves. We finally capture one of the chinga centipedes we’ve been warned so much about. These little nasties apparently sting you unto death, and if you don’t die, you’ll wish you had. They are a furry thing, an exquisitely brilliant, beautiful shade of green set off with jet black markings. Perfectly camouflaged for anywhere they choose to wait for you.

Lew takes 1st Pit 211'
Bob & Rick 2nd Pit 147' + 20'
Lew down 3rd dble pit—insignificant, unrecorded.

Squire & Rick into Sewer Cave—insignificant, unsurveyed.
Squire, Rick, Bob, Lew into and survey Cueva de Cuatros Narices.

(very cautiously; however, cave’s namesakes either not at home or, at least, not receiving guests that day).

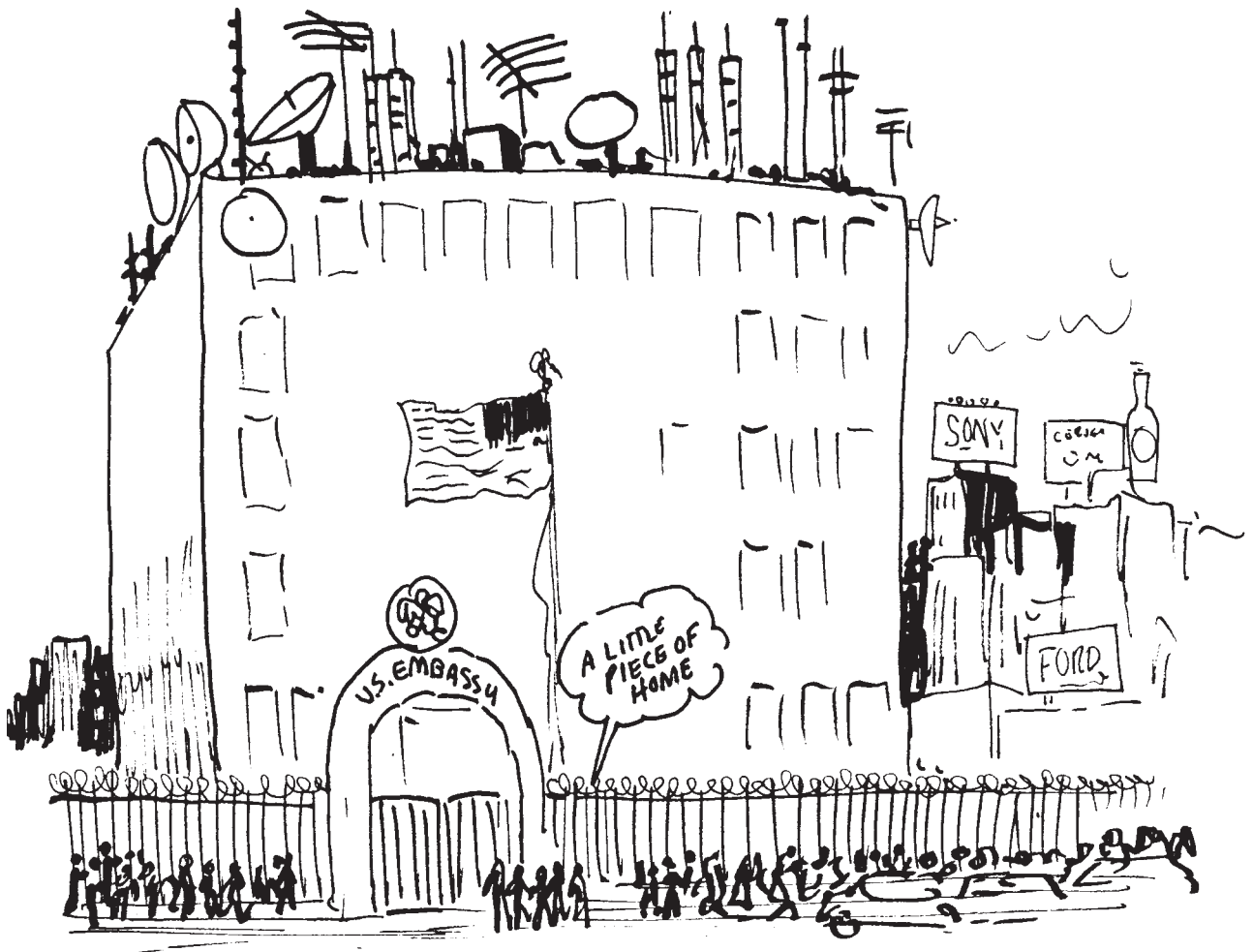
Finally departed about 4 or 5 p.m. and into Xilitla. Retrieved the missing case of beer from Gordo at the Cantina and drank it on the spot. It will not get lost again. Had ordered supper for eight across the street at Restaurante Xochitl. A major operation for them. First you select the chicken you want from the several who are tied by one leg to the posts in the middle of the restaurant, clucking and pecking among the diners. Then you go away for an appropriate time and when you return, your chicken will re-appear rendered into the finished delicacy of your choice, in this case divided by



eight. So we got another case of beer and when it was gone, returned to the restaurant where our banquet awaited. Wondrous, roast chicken (my share was the tip and the next joint of the wing), enchiladas con queso, fried carne, tomates, cebollas, frijoles, tortillas. Back to Gordos—more beer. The village buffoon harasses us, but we are his match. Bob plays the banjo and actually sings—“Pretty Polly.” First time in a thousand concerts Bob has ever sung, probably the last. Finally we leave and down the Xilitla road, much more bombed than really necessary. Made it down to the Pan Am highway, camped about twenty miles south on same. Laidlaw’s truck, which was following, lost somewhere along the way.

Mexico City > Acapulco

7/13 Wednesday Up 6:30 AM, monstrous hangovers, surely due to the sudden altitude drop. Laidlaw has not reappeared. Thru Tamazanchali and back up the mountainside to the very high cliff-clinging road to Mexico City. Sheer cliffs, heights, and drop-offs of the extreme. Most beautiful, awesome, and downright scary. Eat





at some tourist catering place at Jacapili and get our first mediocre meal—bacon and eggs, with American-style toast made from rubber which is called Pan Bimbo. About fifty miles north of Mexico City, pull over and wait from about 1 to 3:30 PM for Laidlaw to show up, once we disappear into the city, re-contact is unlikely. But no show, the mystery continues. We charge onward, eat at great place on outskirts—Milanesa; a thin-cut Mexican steak smashed tender, chicken fried, and smothered in green pepper salsa; served with plenty of frijoles, tomates and tortillas. Gird up our loins, insert ourselves into the fearsome city, find good slum hotel downtown for 25 pesos each, about two bucks U.S. total. All have showers with almost hot water. Joe and Squire walk out around the neighborhood, nothing much doing. Have beer, great torta. Nice talk with guy at the torta stand. To bed. First time we sleep indoors in a real bed in seven weeks.

7/14 Thursday Up late and to American Embassy where myths go up in smoke. Such as—we could get mail which we had told our home-folks they could send there, we could get messages or news of any emergencies at home, we would be helped and protected if we got into any trouble, we could talk a little English to a friendly face, we could get questions answered, and be given help on various situational protocol (i.e. what to do if the fuzz got us). Forget all the above; this place is run by young Mexican first-year English students whose apparent job is to protect all U.S. officials and employes there from being bothered by their citizens seeking

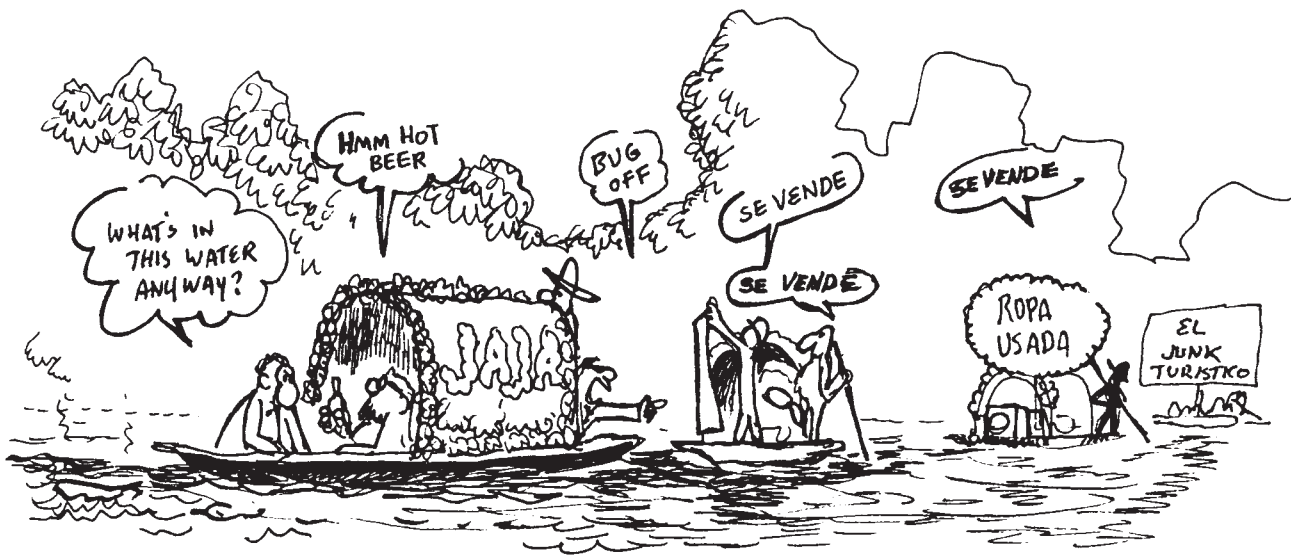
EMBASSY OF THE U.S.



love, service, or help. They will not admit to any mail for us. We make them take a note for Laidlaw with the sure knowledge it will be pitched before we're out the door. Forget the U.S. Embassy, don't know why it's there, but for sure they don't want to mess with any Americans.

On our way out the front door, in comes Lew Bicking looking worse than ever. God help us, I think he has taken us as role models—imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, but Lew's distorted interpretation of our image of what a caver should look like seems to overlook the subtle limits which keep us cool, dashing, and debonair in our affectations. Lew has always been my special protégé, it was I who first took him from his self-conscious, mute agony, non-entity image at the far outer limits of the social circles, gave him beers, got him talking, into the mainstream, recognized, and appreciated as a viable, quite interesting, and very valuable equal within the fellowship. Now we must somehow help him find reasonable boundaries in perfecting the aesthetic presentation of his new self.

However, the reality is that Lew is doing just fine, with or without our help. It emerges that Laidlaw broke a wheel bearing leaving the Xilitla road and will spend his remaining time getting parts, then home to California. Lew departed from them and has somehow gotten himself to the city and found us. In fact, he has gotten all the long way from Baltimore to California to here with nothing but his great dictionary and his crackers. We have never seen him spend any money, not any; he may well not have any. Yet he



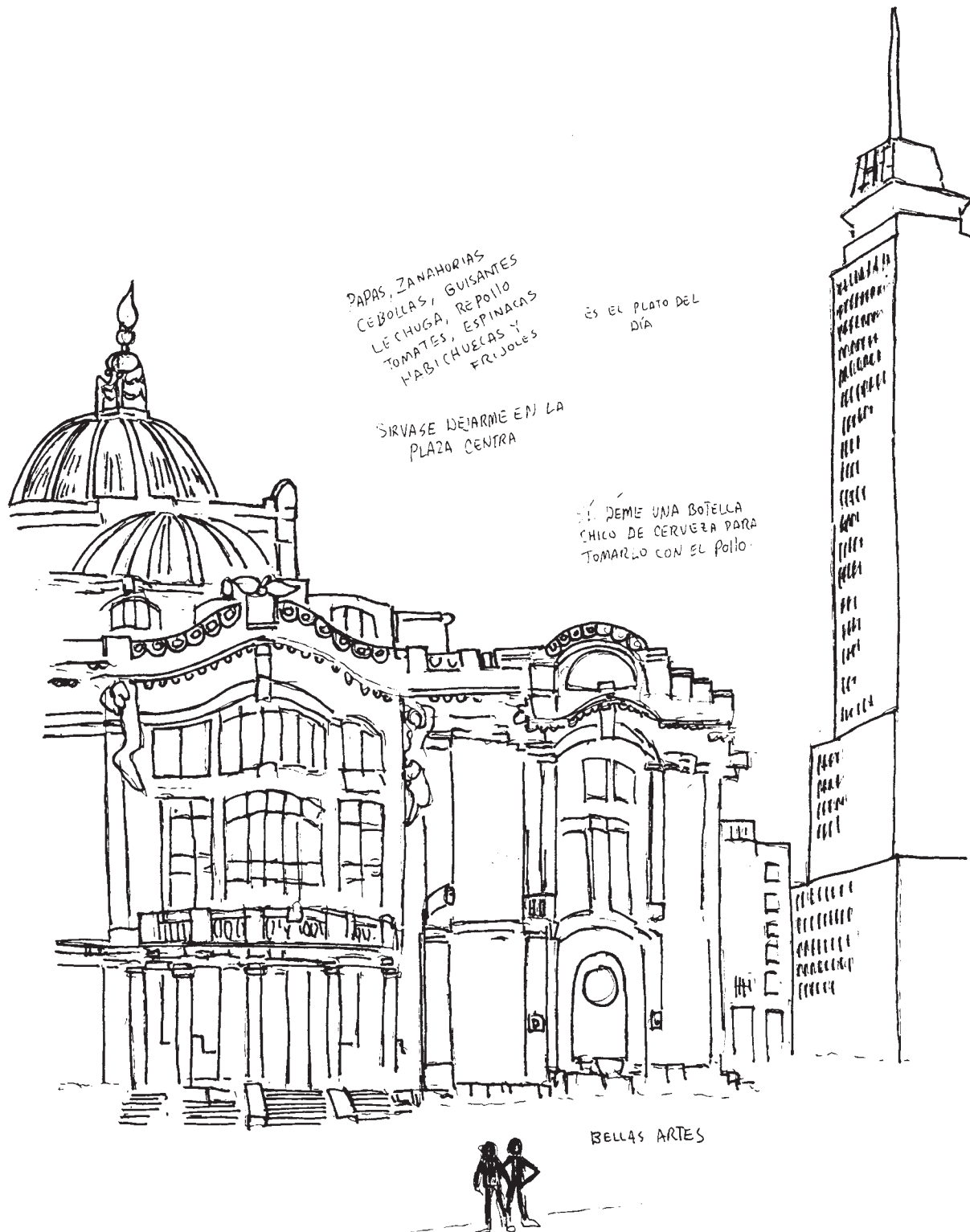
calmly proceeds intact thru all the chaos of the byways and accomplishes his goals. He is the true stuff from which cavers are made.

Onward to the Floating Gardens of Xochimilco with Lew having rejoined us. If they ever floated, they stopped long ago. When Tenochtitlán was an island in the middle of a lake, the Aztecs wove together great clumps of sticks, threw mud on top, and grew stuff. Now they are low islands of mud covered with trees and underbrush and canals in between them. The present day Aztecs have built wagon-sized barges and covered them with garish canopies of fresh flowers. They found that folks would then pay to be poled around the canals in them. Not only that, but they had a captive load of touri to whom they could sell beer and eats for as long as they could keep them captive out there. All their relatives got canoes with which they could attack these barges, selling outrageous serapes, onyx stuff, and all manner of trashy tourist kietsch. (keitsch?)(kitsch?). We have a fine time drinking their beer and fighting off the vendor canoes.

Headed home, encountered leak-producing destruction to gas tank on the mud road out of the place. Fixed quickly by roadside mecanico—40 pesos (\$3.30 US for two hours work, two men). These gas tank experts waiting by the roadside is suspicious, do







they dig the potholes too?? Found our way to the Anthropology Museum and toured the parking lot, too late to go in, so back to the hotel. Good supper at a somewhat fancier restaurant on the way, but not enough side stuff to make a meal. All went walking about town to find a market we knew was somewhere nearby and stumbled onto a little square that was filled with literally hundreds of uniformed musicians, all be-spangled and sombreroed—Plaza de Garibaldi. These were individual bands of about eight players each with two coronets or trumpets, two violins, two straight guitars, a huge bass guitar, and a weeny little tenor guitar. On top of that, all the guys that aren't blowing something sing. A kind of live Mexican jukebox, you put money in them and they do a number. We have a grand time enjoying them, taking free rides on other folk's nickels—no money for this in the budget. Lots of lovers and flower vendors. A wild, unexpected, somehow barbaric scene. Definitely Unamerican. Sense that Pancho Villa will come galloping thru at any minute. Of particular note was the drunken grout proudly and flamboyantly urinating in the midst of the crowd whilst singing outrageously at the top of his lungs. Another totally destroyed drunk, a large, extremely savage-appearing, primitive Indian wearing old time peón clothes and a huge machete, attaches himself to us and would be our "paisano." Went thru the market which was right by the square, getting some eats to supplement our skimpy supper and back to the hotel. Bob and Lew to bed, Squire and Joe to the corner cantina. Have fine evening, make friends with a crippled guitar player who, with two friends, sing for us at three pesos a song. Joe decides to find out what Tequila is all about and enjoys two of them. All is fine as we sit there, he is, to all intents quite sober and rational. Its remarkable qualities are demonstrated when we get up to leave, his legs have been totally disconnected from his brain. By the time we hit the sidewalk, he is widesteping it in all directions, bouncing off buildings and lamp posts. His mind, although rapidly degenerating into silliness, appears quite coherent; but it simply will not connect to the legs and I must physically hold him up and steer him back to the hotel. Both had a lot of laughs accomplishing this, as did the passerbys. We will need further study of Tequila under controlled circumstances so we may understand its potentials.

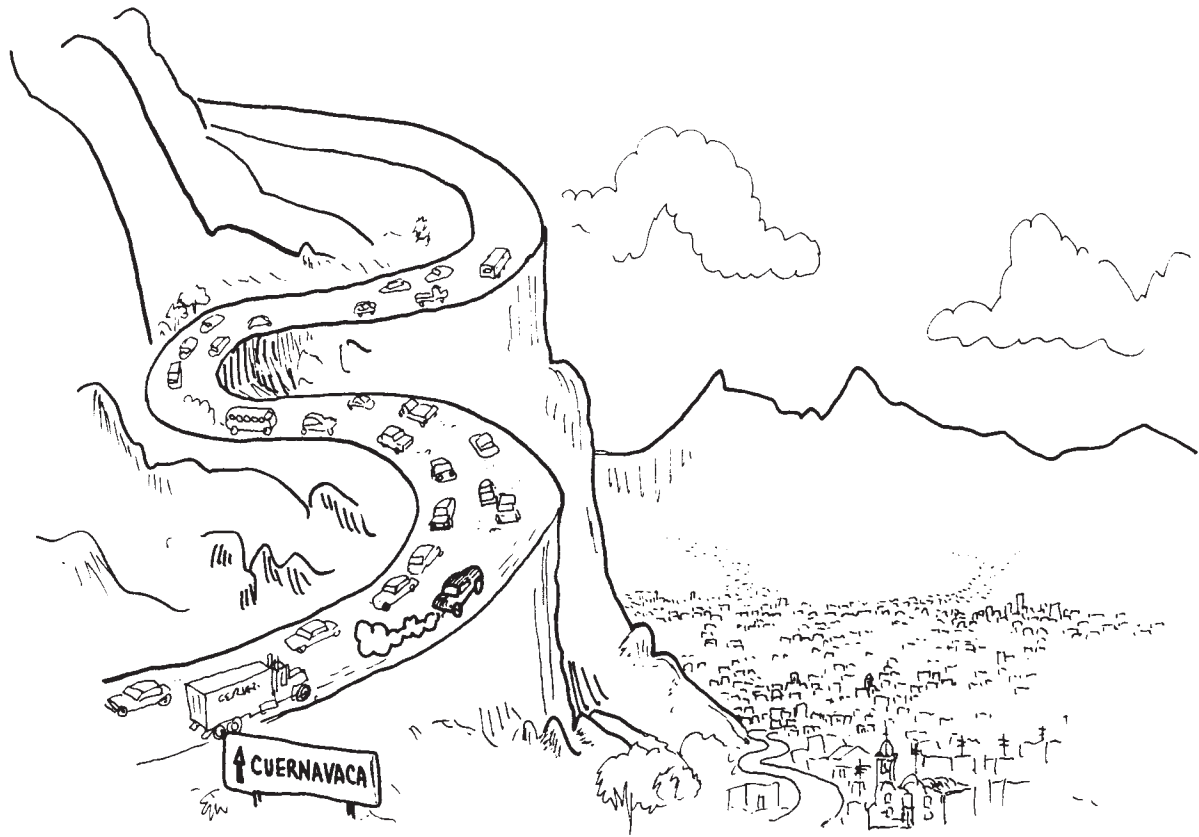
7/15 Friday Up late and doped around room past noon. Showers and checked out. Lew has dissappeared, apparently insulted by our offer to chip in and buy him a new shirt. Off to Chapultepec Castle, succeeded in attaining same only after extreme efforts thru the street mazes and traffic. Sight-saw same till 4 PM, then to Museum of Anthropology. This has to be the finest

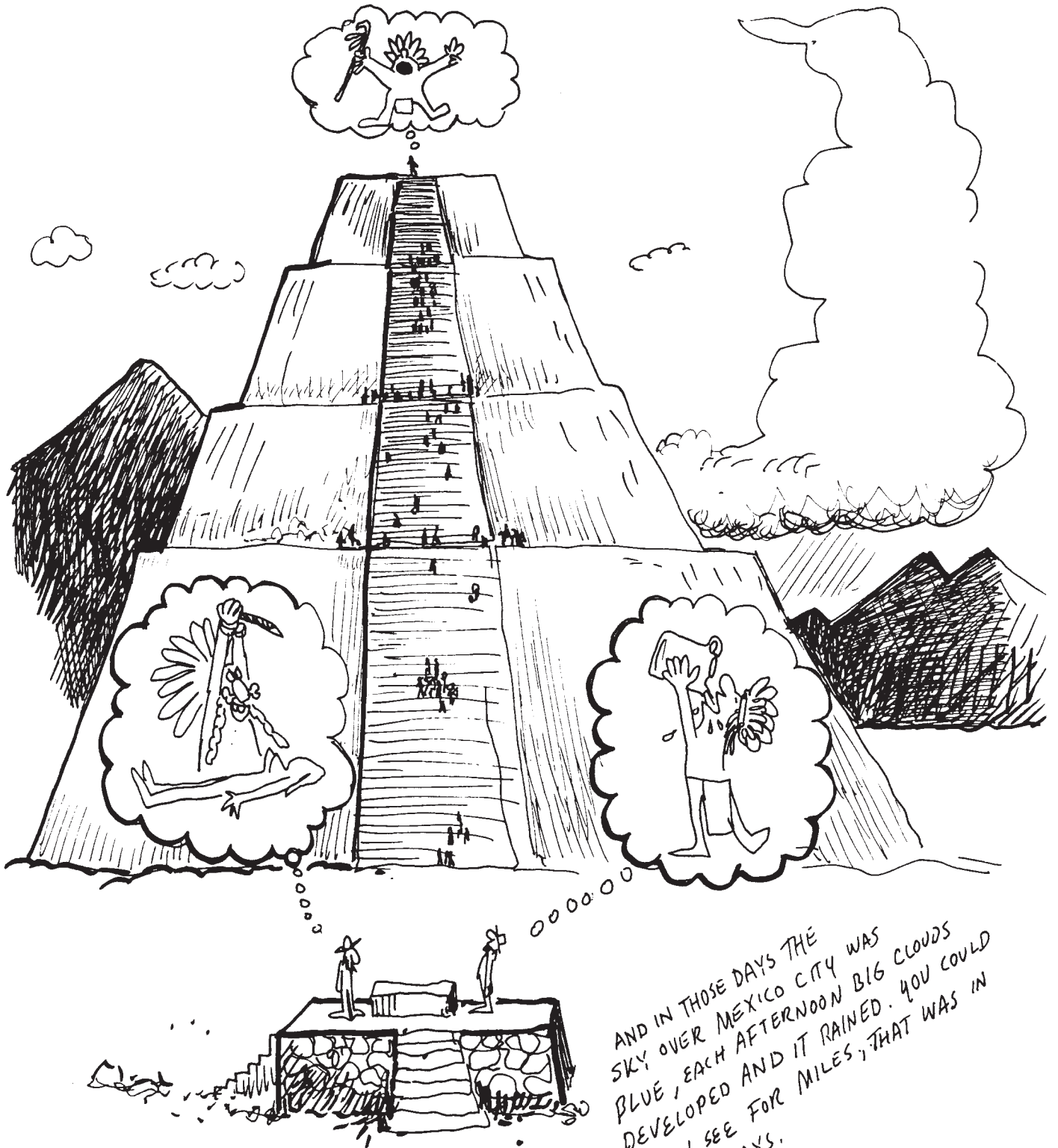
museum ever put together, magnificent. We need to come back and spent a week here. Lights blew out toward the end, none got to see the Mayan section. The museum brings home the immensity of the fact that here was a complete, viable, highly advanced, totally different hemisphere filled with highly developed cultures in place and operating that was completely, deliberately, and with great, hard work dismantled and destroyed from the face of the earth. What a huge, incomprehensible loss and tragedy. I am terrified to think that this mentality probably still lurks engrained inside of us. How can we brainwash our world into an ethos that will respect and see value in the difference of others. For survival of our unique genes, we are instinctively programmed to destroy everything that might compete with them; but the least we need to do is make it against the law to destroy whole civilizations.

More mighty efforts with streets and traffic get us free of town and we head south, leaving the big city with a sigh of relief. Superb view of the city from high up the huge mountain we cross to Cuernavaca. Beautiful pine forests and savannahs on top. If Mexico City is 8,000 feet altitude, this must be at least 10,000 feet. Superb views everywhere. Great supper and beer in Cuernavaca, some kind of grilled-with-garlic beef strips, frijoles, tomates, cebollas, absolutely mouth-watering delicious. Camped off road into Ruinas Xochicalco.

7/16 Saturday Up, good breakfast and to Ruinas, circa 450 to 1150 AD, quite extensive, very fine, massive main pyramid. Real good bas-reliefs on Plumed Serpent Temple, good jai lai court and palacio. Into the tunnels under the big pyramid with guide, great fun for cavers. Guide says skylights above tunnels are for correcting calendars. On to Cacahuamilpa Cave, fantastic location in a semi-tropical ravine setting with immense, sinister entrance, framed with vegetable growth and old, decaying stalagmite draperies. There is no doubt that ancient and bloodthirsty Gods lurk within waiting for us. Huge rooms and formations. We are shown where the dead Inglés are buried, are they trying to tell us something? Dos Bochas, the lower entrances have rivers pouring out of them, quite fine. We can get up to one, but too much river to get back into. Great swinging rope bridge to play on. Fair meal of Pollo Molé and cerveza from vendors outside. Joe makes friends with Perro, the dog and enemies with the limonada vendors.

Onward over mountains and valleys to Taxco. Villages and homes of substantial adobe and a red brick type wall construction with red tile roofs. Many ancient colonial churches and monasteries are in





AND IN THOSE DAYS THE
SKY OVER MEXICO CITY WAS
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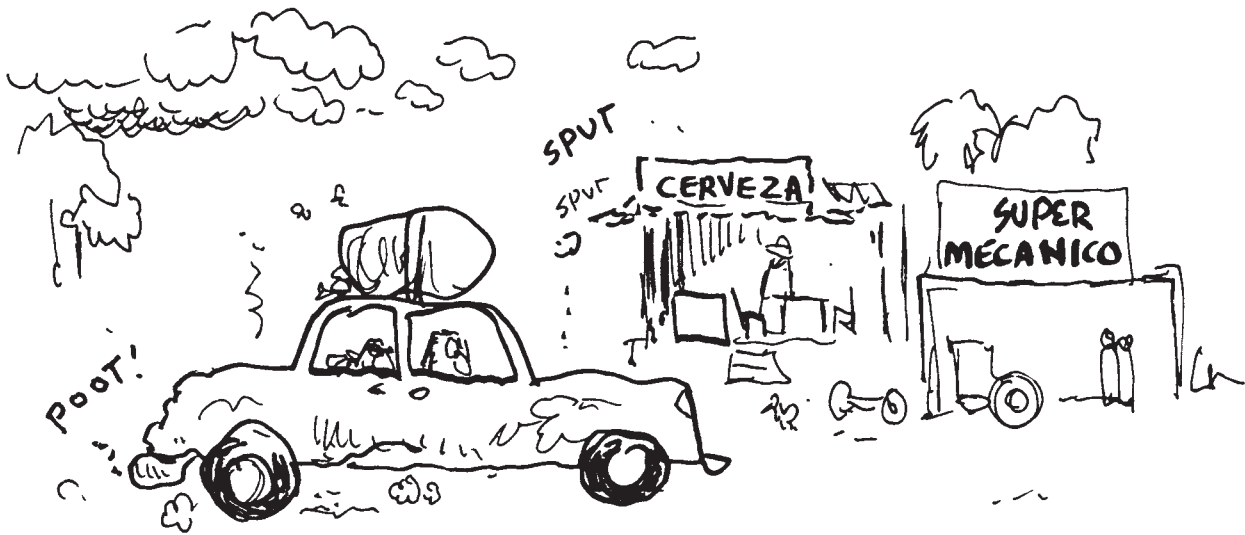
TOURISTING



evidence. Native dress of fine wool serapes and a distinctive wide brimmed, low crowned sombrero with colorful ribbon chin strap and hat band. Proud bearing and sometime fierce appearing folks—this is definitely not an area of humble peasants pulling their forelocks. Stop briefly in Taxco, get silver trinkets for the folks at home. Marvelous little colonial town stuck on hillside. Everyone in town makes stuff out of silver. Incredible churubusco church on the square.

Onward to Iguala. As we bounce into a beerstand, gas tank totally throws in the towel. We have just filled up; by now, it only holds about five gallons anyway. We consult with the Mecánico next door, the usual crowd assembles, and he announces that he will fix the “Tanqué,” that we have placed ourselves in the hands of the supreme tanqué fixer of all Mexico. He gathers together a large assemblage of empty, dirty paint, kerosene and coffee cans and drains the gasoline from the tanqué. We all enjoy beers during the operation. The tanqué is then removed from the vehicle. This is the worst looking tanqué that exists, it resembles a wad of crumbled-up aluminum foil. We all enjoy more beers. The tanqué and all of us move to the middle of the wide mud lot between the beerstand and the mecánico shack. The Tanqué King pours a half a can of gas into the tanqué and we all enjoy beers while the sun heats the tanqué. The Tanqué King then touches his blow torch to the filler spout and with a giant roar, the tanqué explodes; rocketing itself about fifty feet across the lot; spinning, and spewing a jet of flame behind. We regain our feet and the Tangué King triumphantly points to the tanqué. The explosion has blown it perfectly back into its original shape and perhaps, a little more, nary a crease or a wrinkle. We celebrate with some beers. Since it appears that it might rain; we decide that further repairs should wait until after it does, if it does, which we do.

The three of us, the Tanqué King and an unidentified friend are joined by the local Malaria Controller who drives up in his white government jeep, obviously a man of high status. Into the descending darkness, we all enjoy beers and proceed with three hours of discussions in Spanish covering Anglo-Mexican racial problems, cave explorations, Mexico’s losing the big soccer game to London, malaria, and sundry unrecorded topics; all of us obviously talking to each other about different things at different times. After the beer stand finally closes, we reject their invitation to go up town, apparently to the local house of pleasure, where they intend a major blast in our honor (Do we reject this wisely or foolishly?). The holes in the Tanqué are finally soldered, sewed,



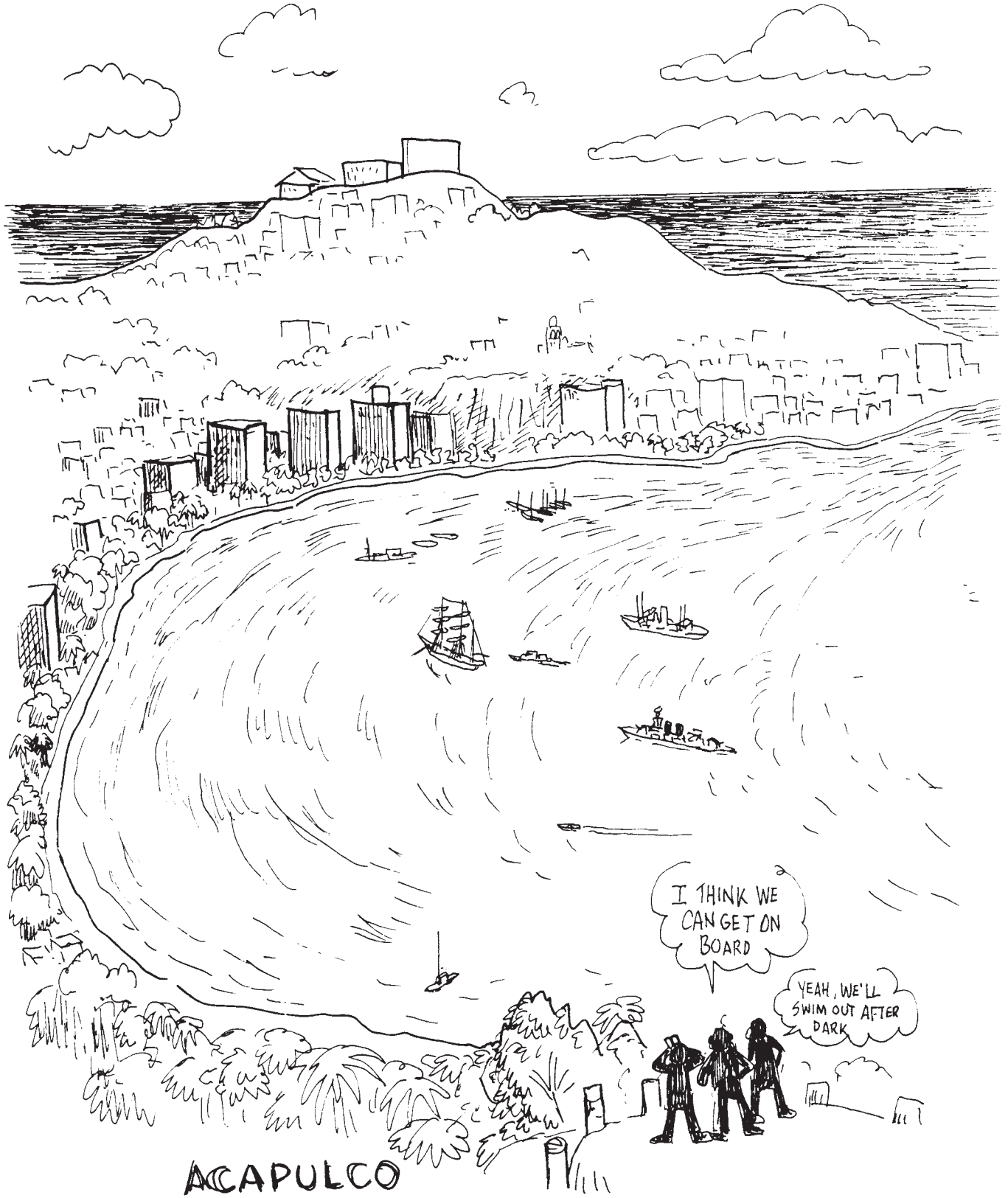


and sealed together, it is re-installed, and we depart, weaving off up thru the mountains outside of town through the rain which has finally arrived. About two miles up the mountainside, Bob announces his inability to keep the car on the road, certainly neither Joe or I are capable of assuming the task. Finds a pull-off along the cliff totally covered with foot-deep, mushy mud which, at this point, is unanimously considered a fine, welcome, and totally acceptable home. In our sleeping bags, rolled up in our GI ponchos; we sink into the mud which really is quite comfortable. In the pattering rain, we collapse into blissful sleep, marred only by the unmuffled propane-powered trucks making it up the mountain and the clip-clop splish-splash of donkey riders tripping by and in between us in the dark.

7/17 Sunday Up and away, beautiful day. Back on the Acapulco road. Start descending into semi-tropical, thatched hut villages. The Canyon de Zopilotes lives up to its name, we are treated to sight of flocks of Zopilotes having breakfast on dead cattle along the way. They hover excitedly over the Rambler, but we pass through the canyon without incident. Enjoy great breakfast at Chilpancingo in big thatched roof, open air joint along the road; excellent Omelete con Jamon. Road turns narrow, high and windy along top of mountainous ravines with rushing rivers below, more and more tropical, jungly as we gradually lose altitude. No towns, occasional isolated, primitive stick and wattle, thatched hut villages. Groups of women along the rivers do laundry, vigorously beating the poor clothes with rocks, spreading violent crowds of outrageous colors to dry among the boulders. Modesty presents no problem when a blouse or skirt needs washing. Finally at the base of the final mountain before town, we are alarmed by the sight of a huge junkyard display of dozens of twisted, wrecked, destroyed busses, obviously harvested from the hundred-odd miles of windy, narrow high ravines we've just passed through. A message of some kind, perhaps "Leave the driving to us, but don't say we didn't warn you."

Up over the last mountain and when we break over the crest about noon; the most exquisitely beautiful sight yet, the incredible, cobalt blue, oval bay encircled with bright green palms and islands with the white houses and soft orange tiled roofs creeping up the steep mountainside. From this height it is all laid out in front of us and is quite literally (and not a bit trite to say) breathtaking.

As we start down the hill, a terrible great four foot Dragon rushes out of a vacant lot, clacking and rattling across the road, stopping



ACAPULCO



directly in front of us, defiantly barring our way. Bob screeches to a halt, and us and the Dragon stare speechless at each other. We quickly roll up the windows and contemplate turning back; at the very least, there will be no sleeping outside in this place. There are no volunteers to shoo the beast out of the way, we have a stand-off. Finally the giant iguana hisses a warning at us and clatters off about his business. We continue, much subdued, down the hill into Paradise.

A government tourist office gives us maps and turns us on to a superb place to make our home. A local doctor has built twelve units on the side of his house and will rent cheap to people they recommend. By what wild stretch of the imagination they recommend us, no one will ever know, but they call the doctor, get the ok and we are approved into the Hotel Loma Linda, high on a breezy hill up above the Yacht Club. Our room is great; ground floor, three beds, veranda with refrigerator, ceiling fan, and opened latticed no-glass windows. Looks down over a fantastic, coconut palm covered, three tiered, private tropical garden with tile swimming pool and barbeque grill. We have found heaven. We are cautioned that we must behave after ten o'clock and no girls in the room. Eighty pesos, six dollars and forty cents U.S. a day for all three.

Joe sacks out, Thren and Squire head for the beach. Locate Caleta Beach two blocks below us with clear blue, warm water and perfect white sand, turista girls and señoritas much in evidence. After swim, zero in on palm tree covered open-air lounge, La Cabaña,



right up against the beach with cerveza at sixteen cents a pop, shrimp sixty cents a dozen, and wandering guitar players. Head home after shade shuts down the beach, a dip in the pool to rinse, and Thren sacks out while Joe and Squire head down town for supper at Los Cabelleros, a second floor, open air middle class restaurant overlooking the Zocálo and bay. Great meal; delicious, generous-sized Milanese with salsa verde, frijoles, ensalada for about eighty cents. Meals run a little higher here, about ten to fifteen pesos/eighty cents to a dollar twenty-five, but excellent quality, not skimpy. We head for the Whiskey A Go-Go where we are rooked. Unnecessarily hit ten pesos each to get in and the promised show is not forth-coming. Fifteen pesos for a Rum

Collins, all ice. Place is loaded with kids doing what they imagine to be the Frug, Spanish-style. We leave, walking the long length of Hornos Beach which we have to ourselves at this late hour. A clear, beautiful, warm moon-lit night; stopping for beers as an occasional beachside joint presents itself. We negotiate with cabs from time to time and finally get some guy to take us home for five pesos. An altogether rewarding day.

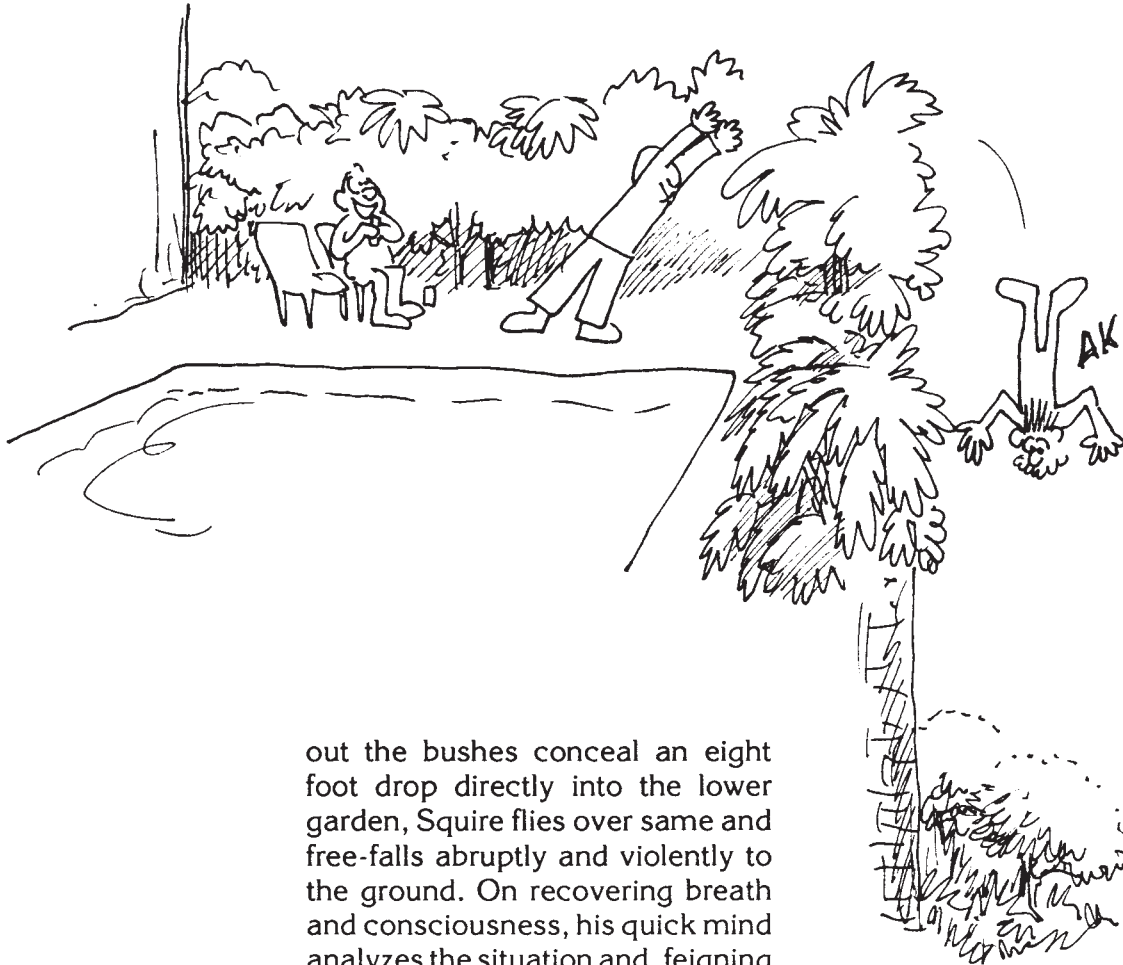
7/18 Monday Mile 10,274 od/50,916 Up by mid-morning, our second time in beds within a week, spoiled rotten. Discover that a large reason for the economy of our luxury room may be that they are adding a third story involving much carpentry, banging, shouting, and etcetera starting at dawn's first light—no matter to us as we enjoy cafe American, jugo de naranja, and tostados con marmalada on our veranda, brought to us by the faithful houseboy, Pablo.

From this point on, logbook keeping gives way to luxuriant indolence during our time here. Our days fall into a pattern—up by noon, coffee and continental breakfast on the veranda, a dip in the pool, to the beach, wallor in the water and sand till 3 or 4 PM, drink beer and enjoy the wandering guitar players while loafing at La Cabaña till near dusk; back for rum and coke at the hotel pool while lounging in same, to supper at the Zocálo about 9 PM, and to bed between midnight and 3 AM. On this particular day, we missed the planned trip to the bull fights because it was simply too delightful on the beach to leave; didn't forget it, just didn't care to bestir ourselves from where we were at. The tropics have overtaken us.

*The Week from arrival 7/17, Sunday
to departure 7/23, Saturday*

The following events blended into and highlighted the above daily pattern throughout the week, not necessarily in chronological order....

1. Immediately discovered the corner grocery sold fine Bacardi Rum for \$1.80 U.S. a full litro. This makes drinking top-of-the-line rum cheaper than beer.
2. Squire's famous leap: The first night while playfully frolicking at the pool, Squire is good-naturedly attempting to insert the fully clothed Joe into the pool. Joe considers this not a viable action and hurls Squire into the bushes behind the pool. Turns



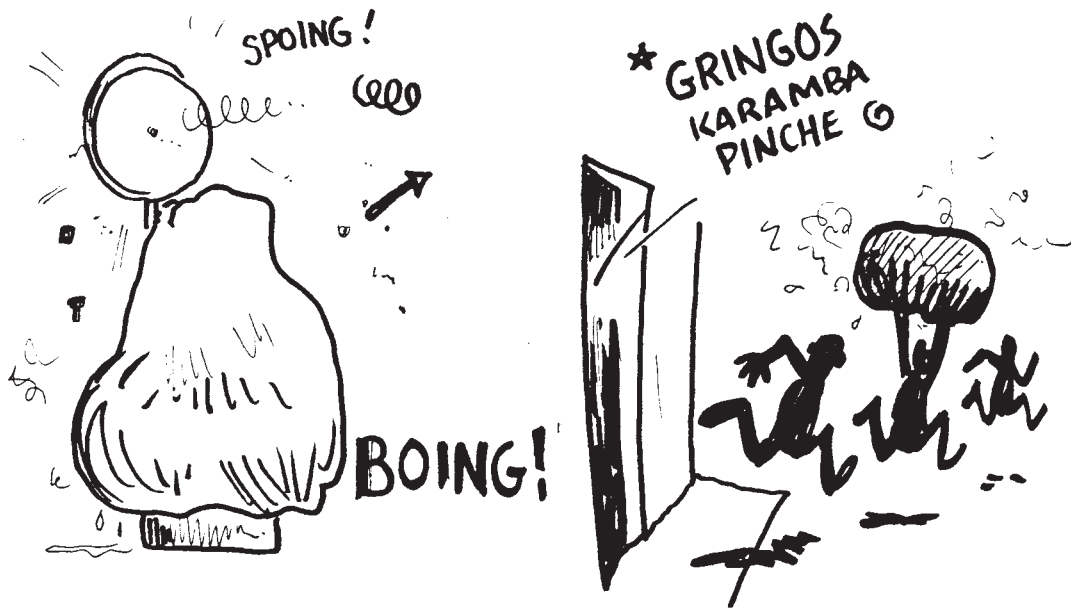
out the bushes conceal an eight foot drop directly into the lower garden, Squire flies over same and free-falls abruptly and violently to the ground. On recovering breath and consciousness, his quick mind analyzes the situation and, feigning great injuries and tipping Thren off, gets them to carry him up to poolside where he suddenly revives and hurls the solitious and guilt-stricken Joe into the water, thus accomplishing both revenge and the original objective.

3. We have never succeeded in doing any laundry in this country and are all completely out of any clean clothes whatsoever, a giant compacted laundry bag contains everything we own. On the third day in town, Joe takes command of the situation, the laundry downtown is located, and he proceeds to negotiate a deal for our great festering sack of dainties. Despite heroic linguistic efforts, he is unable to break through and convince the lady that “fluff-dry” is all we want, that we can’t begin to

afford her demand of 100 pesos (\$6. U.S.) to do our sackfull complete with the starching and ironing she insists we need. Ultimately, he leaves in disgust amidst her tirade after our sack, overweighted with dirt, damp, and mildew, crushes and destroys her scale. We cannot return to this place.

4. After this rout, we inquired in desperation at the government tourist bureau and got directions to the "Lava-Mex," a laundromat, which is what we needed in the first place. Following to the letter our best interpretation of the directions, we went down the street, past three umbrellas, and turned left; from then on, our different understandings of where to proceed degenerated. With help from passers-by, we got to see nearly all of downtown Acapulco's back streets and finally decided that our laundry was not meant to be done in Mexico. Abandoned the project forever and went to get beers and swimming.
5. Bob and Squire discover "El Amigo" where Mama Juanita prepares for us the most wondrous of Tortas. She responds to our enthusiastic signs of appreciation, complements, and repeat business throughout the week by skillfully heaping on

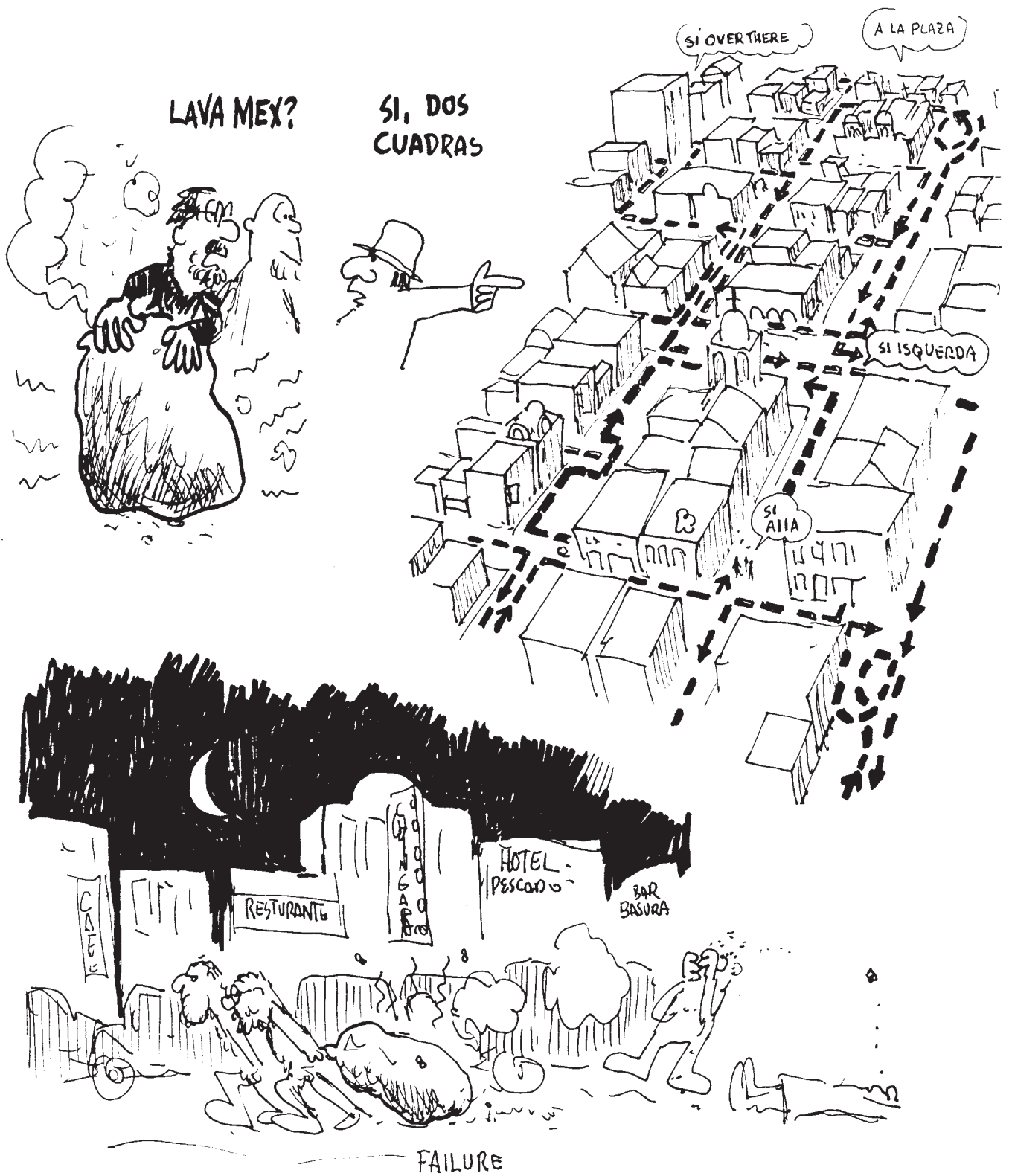




more and more delicately blended ingredients, including, but not limited to chorizo, puerco, pollo, jalapeños, avocate, cebollas, tomates, artichokes, papaya, lettuce, goat cheese and other mysteries, all combined inside a greasy grilled bolillo (those totally delicious Mexican rolls with the hard-as-a-rock crusts) under completely unhygienic conditions for the price of two pesos (sixteen cents) each.

Bolillos deserve a comment. Wandering around in the weeds in Mexico, it is great to have a couple of them in your pocket. Their hard crust protects them from smashing and dirt infiltration. They become more durable with time and retain their marvelous flavor. Then when you can't find a local McDonald's or Stop & Go that inspires confidence, you can just brush one off and enjoy a delicious, filling snack to get you through the day. It is necessary to leave behind your U.S. must-have-butter attitude and to have reasonably good teeth.

6. All go one evening to the Club de Eski. Saw the water ski show free by peering over the wall. First carefully checking prices, (after our Whiskey a Go-Go shafting), went in to see their night club show. Enjoy same muchly (twice), enjoyed Rum Collinses and Screwdrivers, decent size, strength, and quality; modest enough prices, about seventy-five cents each. Hard on the budget, but this was our one big night out. Hilarious U.S. comedian, Mexican singer/comedian, lady Mexican singer. On to the Memo Piano Bar, beachside at Hornos Beach and the bay, enjoyed leaning on the bar, making friends, music. Evening ruined after we left and discovered Bob's wallet lost with his last fifty-five bucks in same, all papers, driver's license, etc. Went back; searches at all places fail to recover same, undoubtedly scarfed up by kid cleaning up after him at Memo's but can't prove anything. Cop on street fails to speak English after learning what our trouble is, we are not skillful enough to enlist his help with a gratuity. Abandoned search and take home a badly drunken Mexican who accosts us outside the Memo with a great Spanish tale of woe which we never did figure out what was. Home we go with him to a great walled house outside a big hotel down near the Hilton. Señoritas in nightgowns come out as he climbs over the gate to open same, and motions us in with the car. We go inside long enough for one look at the fishy-eyed, very angry boss señora and, from previously experiences going home with drunks who wouldst have us in to meet their wonderful missus who will be so delighted to meet us, we abjure at this hour of nearly dawn



and so home to bed (have we passed up another good thing—sure was a big rich house ?). Next day Joe swears this entire last episode never occurred, having been apparently been enjoying a short nap throughout.

7. At Club de Eski, met a teacher, one Hank Virgilio of Lansdale, Michigan who invited us to cocktails next day at 1 PM at the Acapulco Hilton. Bob and Squire go, in their normal cover attire (what else did we have ?), gaining the lobby by marching through the various guards with the general air that we owned the place, and met Hank. Consumed rums and screwdrivers in the most splendid of atmospheres among the Jet Set till 4 PM, making Hank's trip for him with great tales of our adventures. Quite apparent was his eagerness to rush to his friends in the hotel and back home in Lansing with report of the exotic explorers and vagabonds he has met and actually made friends with. Unfortunately, his invitation to be his guests for cocktails turns out not to include his paying for them, it's a struggle fumbling him into paying a third of the bill. We have enjoyed many more beverages than we would have under this false delusion and our budget takes a licking at rich folk's prices. Then takes us for a tour all through the hotel and grounds, all brand new and quite fabulous. Met one of his little friends who had rented one of the deluxe single unit cabañas but moved into a regular room first thing in the morning - "Would you believe, they weren't even air-conditioned? I could only sleep from 3 AM to 7 AM." Hank's biggest impression of Acapulco was when the hotel guide drove them through the red light district where "The streets weren't even *paved*."
8. Took a glass-bottom boat trip around the bay one day. Shore lines were great from this angle with breakers moiling and crashing about the sheer cliffs and rock outcroppings. Many types of multi-hued fish, coral, and other stuff observed in the bay and brought up by the diver for closer inspection. Saw the much-touted underwater shrine to the Virgin of Guadalupe which was about as might be expected. Divers took a few jumps off high cliffs for our benefit. Altogether quite a nice trip, pleasant and interesting, worth the money, albeit without great incident.
9. On taking our initial swim at the beach one afternoon; Thren and Squire, whose eight week beards are showing some degree of respectability, find themselves part of a alarming and astonishing congregation of other beards grinning and



bobbing about in the water. We make acquaintance with two of them. From California, they have hitch-hiked down, apparently lived and worn out their welcome from place to place through sheer scroungery. If all their tales are true, they have gathered enough material to write their doctorate thesis on brothels and wenchery in contemporary Mexico. In the course of the afternoon at La Cabaña, they do prove more adept scrounges than us, the contest ends up with us buying one more round than them and them consuming a pack of our Delicados.

10. Then there was the night when Thren and Squire were strolling up the deserted Caleta Beach, when we are rushed by a quite comely Lady of the Night who was hiding behind a palm tree. Selects Thren as her particular target, hurls her arms around him and walks up the beach with us, describing her charms and the delights available. Interesting events may have developed, had we been in possession of the opening price of cinquente pesos.
11. The Day of Great Debauchery began innocently enough with our glass-bottom boat trip. Said trip started at 11:30 AM and, as a part of the admission, included all the free beer one could consume during the voyage. Gentlemen that we were, we confined ourselves to three or four throughout the course of the trip. Actually the amount anyone would drink was cleverly limited by natural causes, such as how long you could go without a bathroom of which there was none. We got back to the hotel about 1:30 PM, gratefully relieved ourselves, and changed for the beach. Had greasy Huevos chorizos at the grass shack halfway down the hill to the beach and, of course, beers all around. After our refreshing dip at Caleta, found that the salt water had quite naturally developed a great thirst within us, so enjoyed three or four beers at our beloved La Cabaña while soaking up the aura of the luxurious gentle warmth of the sun combined with the heavenly panorama of azul waters and shimmering white sands; framed in lush, brilliant green tropical palms; all accentuated by the passing parade of nature's most generously exposed bikini-clad wonders.

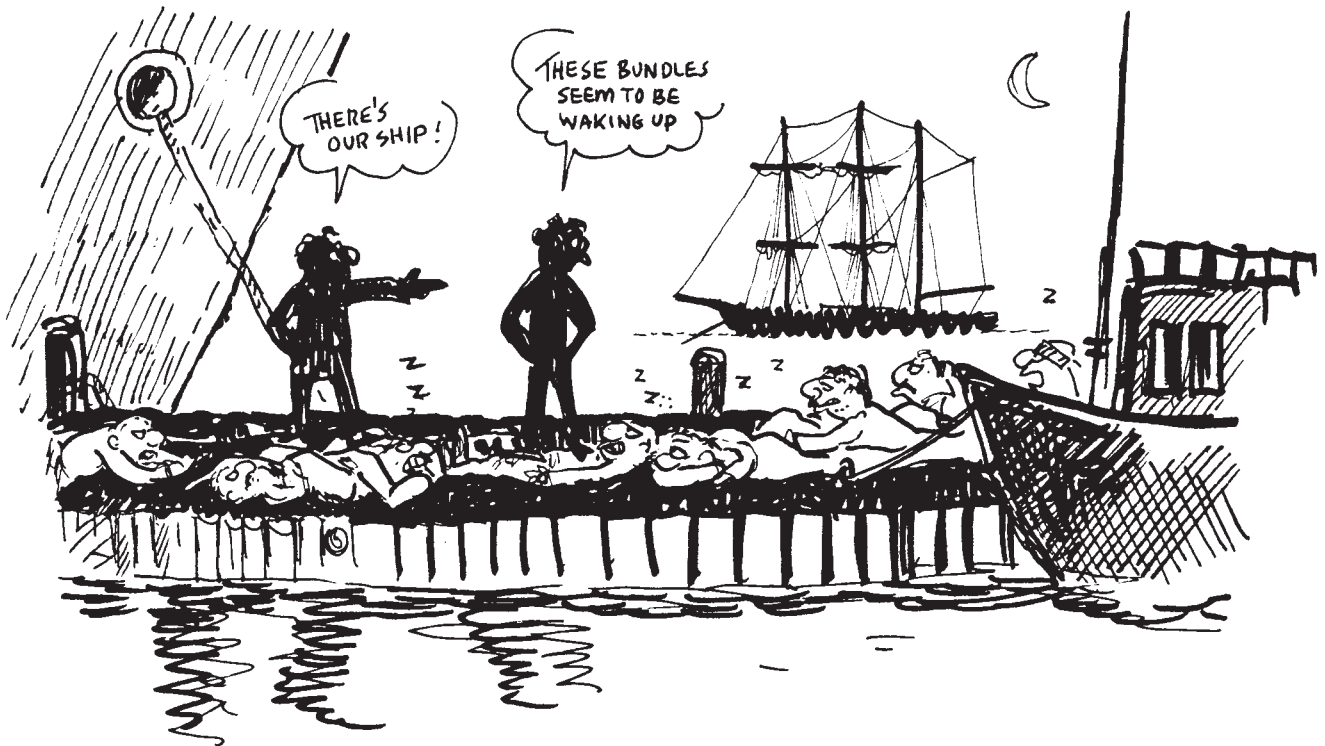
Back at the hotel, as was our custom, it was necessary that we have a short dip in the pool, rinsing off the salt water and leaving ourselves fresh and clean. On such a glorious late afternoon, (becoming more glorious each moment !), what



more appropriate than that we enjoy a rum and coke while undergoing the aforesaid purifying process. At this point, we foresaw and forestalled an impending bad thing. We observed that we had only one-half a litro of rum remaining and the Squire was dispatched to the corner grocery to remedy this impending shortage. He returned with a full additional litro of fine Bacardi obscura together with necessary cokes and limones, thus insuring a carefree and relaxed evening at home with plenty for all. Thus we continued, alternating with lounging in the pool with full glasses and lounging in the poolside chairs with full glasses amidst the brilliantly beautiful jungle setting. At one point, we were dissuaded by Pablo from an attempt to scale the side of the building to a balcony above where some fair maidens had been observed.

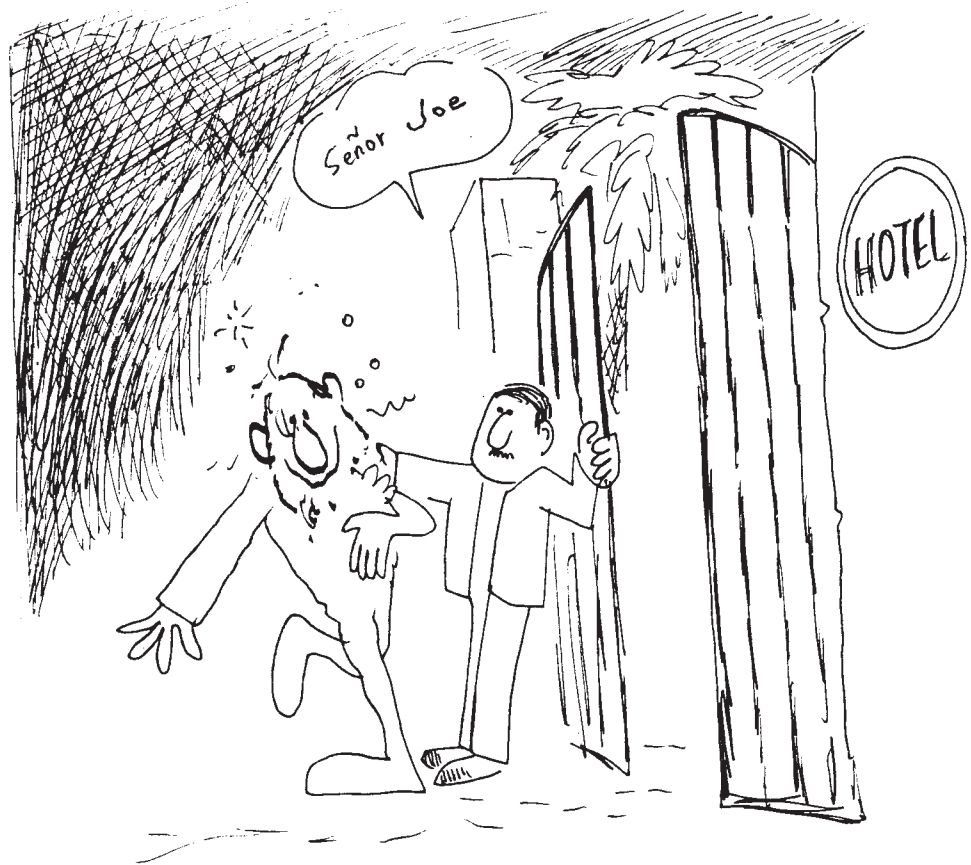
Unfortunately, we again ran out of Rum. Once more, fulfilling his primary function as logistics director, Squire was dispatched to the corner grocery. His linguistic abilities had improved vastly in the course of the afternoon and the replenishment was accomplished much more quickly. El Escudero regresó promptly, laden with un otro litro de Ron Bacardi obscuro, más cocas, y más limones. The frolicking, relaxation, et al continued until we observed that the cocktail hour must

be past (*due to the fact that we had again run out of rum*). As it was now some indefinite time past midnight, we decided to head downtown for supper at Los Cabelleros, provided they were still opened. After the rather busy day, Joe decided to forgo supper and just stay in the room to rest a little, even though we shouted, shook, and even pulled him off the sofa onto the floor in attempting to wake him up. However, he did graciously, if unwittingly, loan us a hundred pesos. Thren and Squire proceeded to Los Cabelloros which was opened and where they did, indeed, enjoy an outstanding late supper of Bifstek Rancheros con papas, tomates, cebollas, y refritos (and, of course, several beers—as everyone knows, you should never drink the water), this in the second floor, open air patio overlooking the moonlit bay. Then what better after-dinner constitutional than to enjoy a stroll down Hornos Beach and have some more beers at a beachside cafe, which we did. Finally; contented, all senses satiated, we meandered up through the flower-fragrant bayside park midst the palms, sensuously enfolded in the balmy tropical air. Finding ourselves at the deserted shipping docks, we decided to walk out and inspect the freighters which we did, discovering in the process a full-rigged, beautifully appointed, two masted millionaire's sailing schooner; black, trimmed in gold. Perceiving a sleepy



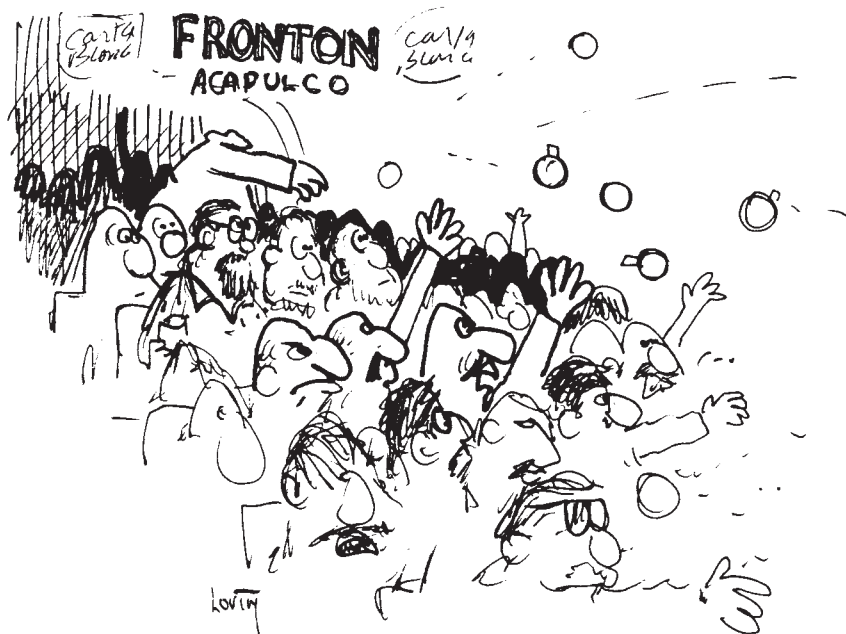
head momentarily appearing over the rail, we hissed and called for its attention, feeling it would probably be glad to show us over the ship. However, all to no avail, and it was at this time that we noticed we were in the midst of dozens of bodies sleeping on the dock, in all directions, completely surrounding us,—on the ground, on bales, under rags, everywhere. Those nearest us were starting to stir, raise heads, mutter ominously, and roll white eyes. It appeared to our best personal interests to decamp instanter, which we did. Finally regaining the car without further incident, we returned to the hotel where we had to awaken Juano, the faithful nightboy, to unlock the great Hispano-Moorish grilled gates and admit us. And so to the closing of a perfect day, when, discovering the heel of the last litro of rum was sufficient for a nightcap, we prepared same, relaxed and reviewed the day's many and rewarding events.

It was at this point we noticed that Joe had dissappeared from his bed where we had left him!



Little is known of his actions nor is it likely that anything ever will be known. He was returned to the room after an indeterminate period of search, either led or being led by Juano. They were having a great and voluble discussion in Spanish and since Joe speaks little and understands less Spanish, he is unable or unwilling to shed light about what they were talking. The fragment of interpretation we are able to draw from Juano was that Juano had saved Joe from some great disgrace (perhaps involving the girls overhead) which could have entailed frightening consequences and that it was appropriate to reward Juano with an entire American dollar. This was done amidst much rum-inspired linguistic histrionics and the mystery continues unsolved.

The nightcaps were finished without further ado and, at an hour totally unknown, all to bed after another fun-filled day in Acapulco.



12. Went one night to the Jai Lai games. Sadly, by the time we started to understand the rules and enjoy the competition, the games were over. The Acapulco Fronton is rather disappointing; very impressive outside, but shabby inside. Slick gambler-types sell the bets. You hold up a hand, they throw you a tennis ball with a slit in it. You stuff the money in it, shout your choice, and throw the ball back to him. He takes out the dough, stuffs in a betting slip, and throws it back to you.

Balls fly in all directions throughout the matches as the odds change.

13. In front of us at the Jai Lai sits a rich Touri type who is getting his rocks off telling his friends of the “absolute squalor” he has seen from his hotel tour-guide bus. The tourists we see and with whom we have talked seem preoccupied with this sort of observation. Wouldst they could come with us a day or two and see the matchless, incredible beauty everywhere around us; in the natural wonders surely, but mainly in the people. Do they see how clean these people are, even though it is a hundred times more difficult for them to stay clean with only primitive water supplies—squalor, indeed ? Do they ever notice the people’s intrinsic courtesy, respect, strength, and downright forbearance in response to their own crudeness, rudeness, and aggravated buffoonery. And do they ever notice the wonderful families enjoying each other on the beaches and on the streets, all together, from toddlers to grandparents, all there and all obviously liking being with each other ? Etcetera, etcetera. Wouldst they could forget about the marble fountain in their hotel lobby and look about them a little closer. Pity for them, their values will leave them empty at the end of their lives; even more pathetic that they may not even know how empty they are.

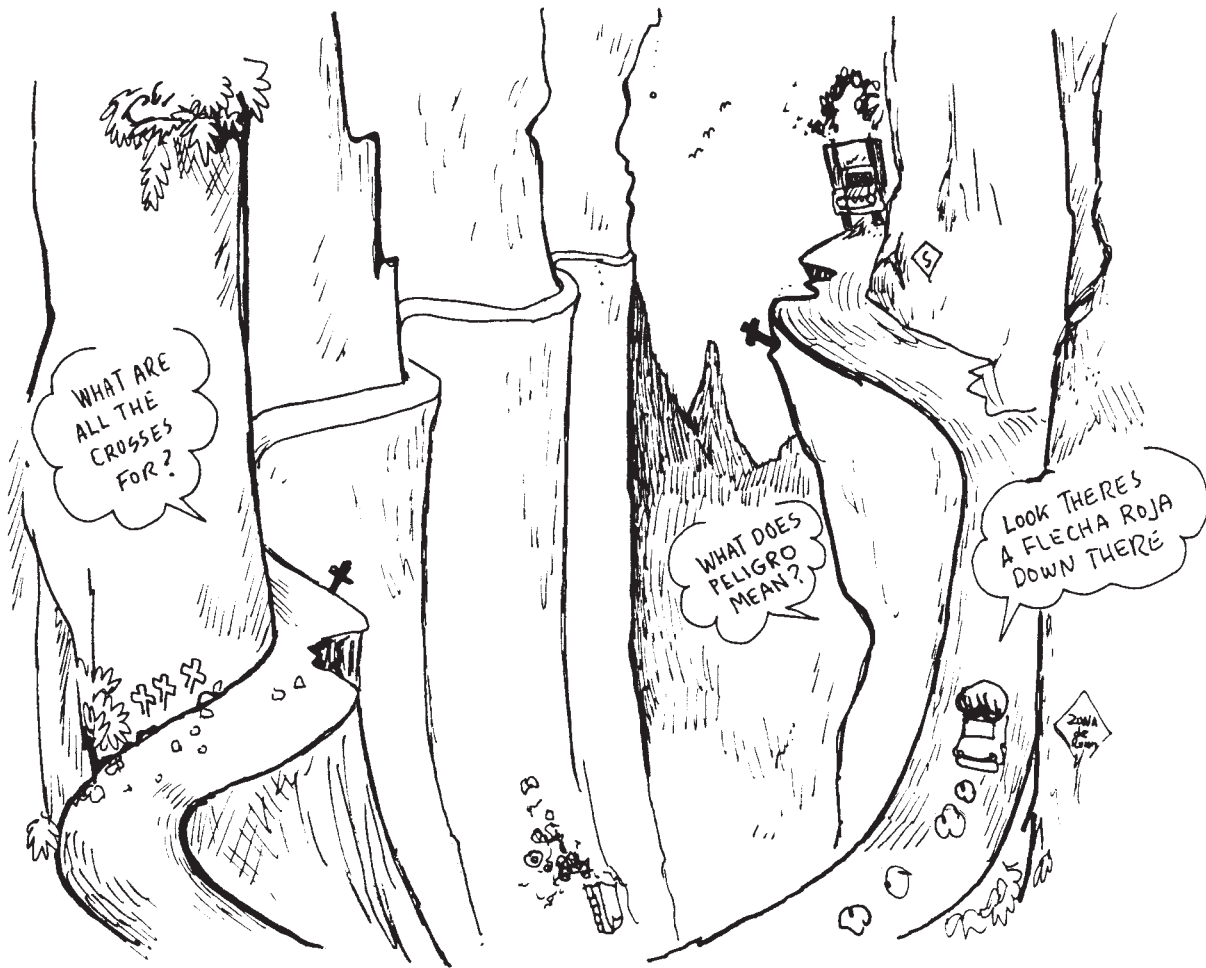


14. Went to see the famous divers one night, but were too cheap to pay our way into a close enough place to see; so only saw same from a faraway position up along the highway. We can say we saw them, but that's about all.

7/23 Saturday Mile 10,386 od/51,028 Over mighty protestations from Squire, we load out and depart Acapulco about noon. Pablo loads all our gear to the car midst a continuous flow of his usual cheerful, uninterpreble communications, each sentence ending in the word, "Bacardi," and followed by gales of laughter. Doctor Hernández, our host, conducts us to the tourist bureau, where we are sent to the police station to record Bob's loss of the wallet. The money lost is all he had, he will survive the balance of the trip with his Las Vegas winnings which are thirty two dollars worth of nickels stashed in a dirty sock in the trunk. But should be plenty, Acapulco was our big luxury, we are now back on the bum and will skid row it all the way north.

Acapulco > Texas

So farewell to beautiful Acapulco and into a peculiar several-day period of starvation where, for no discernable reason, we ate no food until after three in the afternoon. Drove all day without incident, bypassing Mexico City by taking side road thru Canyon de los Lobos and up thru Amecameca and Chalco to get to the Teotihuacan Pyramids. Much serious navigating involved. Road thru Canyon de los Lobos the nastiest piece of hardtop (or any other kind) we've yet encountered in degree of exposure. A mere niche chipped out of a sheer cliff. Barely two car widths wide and the edge of the asphalt was the edge of the road, dropping sheer vertical at that point. Every block or so, a big bite had dropped out of same, requiring barely squeezing by against the cliffside. The dropped-out bites were fresh, there was no knowing when, where, or how heavy a vehicle would cause the next to drop. Also no conceivable turning around, no turning back. We pretended it wasn't scary. Ate in Texcoco and were nearly destroyed by the Comida Corrida. First a large bowl of greasy soup, murky and suspicious with dirty colored noodles and unidentifiable bits of matter in it, which we gustily gobble down, seconds are included in the price. Followed by a huge plate of rice with a fried egg sitting on top. We polished this off, filling up with tortillas along the way. Thinking the meal was over, we were dumbfounded when presented with a giant stew apparently containing all the week's leftovers of many strange kinds. Gorging it all down, topping it off with the solid sugar dulce; we tottered out, made it to Teotihuacán, and passed out under an abandoned guard station, spending an uneasy night belching and keeping an eye on the several battered old cars which kept cruising around us, obviously sizing us up for banditry. We apparently do not qualify; perhaps it is our great, unwashed laundry sack which is now damply festering on the roof rack and, whenever we stop, spreads a miasmatic aura over us.



7/14 Sunday Up early, but had to wait around until 10 AM for the museum to open. Excellent small museum just being put together. The pyramids and other temples are superb. Climbed slowly, way up to top of the Pyramid of the Sun and the Pyramid of the Moon, fantastic views. Temple of Quetzalcoatl has magnificent full relief giant plumed serpent heads which, if you stick your arm into their mouth, will bite your arm off if you have been a bad person lately. We pass the test and prove ourselves to be good persons. Very fine pictographs and petroglyphs recently uncovered in other temples. Whole area is paved in shards but none of interest. Found several nice obsidian sword edges. Stayed until about 1 PM, poking around and dodging sellers of "artifacts autenticos."

Headed on thru the magnificent hills north of Mexico City. Fun mix-up at lunch in circa 1920's tourist trap restaurant. Squire



orders two plain ham sandwiches, Thren and Joe order Huevos Chorizo with tomatos, onions, and refritos on the side. They get plain Huevos Chorizos, Squire's ham sandwiches have tomatos, onions and the refritos inside them. So much for our Spanish improving.

At Tamazanchale after re-running the magnificent chasms of the road north to here, all have excellent supper of pork chops, always a winner in Mexico. Dry camp along the roadside east of Ciudad Valles. Joe is stricken with violent, debilitating case of the turistas evoking mighty groans, cursings, and thrashings around throughout the long night, probably from the Great Comida Corrida of Texcoco which had given Thren and Squire some mild cramps the night before.

7/25 Monday Up and on the way to Tampico. Joe is pale and shakey, but well enough to mean-eye us for our lack of appropriate response to his near-death of the night before. With only one top climber on his feet, we by-pass Ventana Jabili (again). And by-pass our planned side trip to root around the ruins at Tamuín, we are in a day of strange lack of enthusiasm. Make it to Tampico, which we wanted to check out. Find the beach, Thren and Squire have a swim. A most distressing contrast to Acapulco; oily, full of garbage, dirty colored sand, and stringy material suspiciously resembling sewage. Swim takes about thirty seconds, up to the ankles only. We are in an unpleasant, bad-vibes part of town. We don't like it where we are.



For many long days now, we have passed through, lived close within, seen, smelled, breathed, felt, and wrapped around us the most exotic, contrasting, unbelievable country we could have imagined. We have experienced moving backwards in time to places locked in a long-past storybook era. We have savored strange and splendid foods, and drinks more delectable than we've ever had before. We have been given friendship, fellowship, hospitality, and kindness by a countryside filled with the most incredibly fine, nice people. We have enjoyed and appreciated the hell out of it all with thoughts only for what new surprise, beauty, adventure, and excitement would be around the next corner. Now, very suddenly and without warning, we all urgently and con-

sciously want some Kentucky-fried chicken, a cheeseburger, the signs to be in English, beer with German names, a laundromat, a glass of water. Right now.

We clear out without further ado, head north and west, on through Monterrey, through Saltillo, and make camp late on the desert plateau north of same. Excellent cool sleeping weather and; for once, in the vast, empty stretch of dry, desolate desert; peace and freedom from the eternal nocturnal donkey riders, pedestrians, and other sundry things tripping through our bedrooms.

7/26 Tuesday Mile 11,628 od/52,270 Up at dawn to a beautiful desert sunrise. We find ourselves in the middle of a very wide, flat plateau covered with low dessicated scrub, surrounded by bare, dry, jagged mountain ranges. While Joe and Bob sleep, I walk a half hour out into the desert to get the feel of same. A time for looking very close at very small things. Suddenly the great, vast, parched nothingness is found to be filled with hundreds of little living beings, all making it in their own way with whatever they find at hand. A time to stand very quietly for a moment and, unexpectedly, a strange thing moves, makes noise, lives close to where you are. An incredible, hidden world.

On return to camp, find that Joe has discovered a giant scorpion and two cockroaches inside my sleeping bag—yes, there are indeed more living things making their way in the desert than we might find necessary.

Head for the border, stopping in a high mountain pass along the way to change points, clean plugs, and cook up some coffee. Stop in Piedras Negras to enjoy a last limonada, stock up on Bacardi rum and Delicados. Cross customs, no check by Mexicans; a minimum of unpacking by U.S. customs. Make it to bank and change pesos back to dollars. Head up the road and hit the first bar we pass, find ourselves blabbing away ninety miles an hour to everyone in sight, an incredible relief to talk to anyone we want and they will understand us and we can understand anything whatsoever that they say back to us. Stop at Del Rio to do our outrageous great bag of laundry which by now has spent two weeks damp on the roof of the car. There are many large, colorful, and handsome mold and fungus cultures throughout our dainties. Several runs through the machines and a gallon of bleach prove the new designs to be quite colorfast and permanent. We will set the new fashion trend and run the tie-dye industry out of business. At least, they are now all squeaky clean once more.

The long period of struggle to maintain clean linen has caused me to raise thoughts regarding a cultural artifact so deeply engrained in civilized cultural thinking that no one has questioned or examined the proposition within any living memory. Everyone knows that you must wear underwear and, most importantly, it must be clean underwear. Even if you don't give a damn yourself, "what if you were in an accident." There is a great universal preoccupation with this, certainly among all mothers, but also deeply within our own subconsciousness, we all worry about whether our underwear is in place and clean every day. Well, now.... What about no underwear at all ??? Who the hell ever decided we must all wear underwear all the time anyway ??? It probably all got started as a status symbol. Much of the time over the past month, I have elected to wear no underwear at all, rather than wear nasty underwear. Frankly this was a very great relief, very comfortable, cool, a feeling of great freedom, a very clean airy feeling. Underwear must be changed every day, this is a rule and I believe in it. The second day we know that it is unclean and if we keep it on, we subconsciously carried this bad knowledge around with us. We have made ourselves scuzzy people, violated rules, feel unpleasantness and guilty about it and, worse yet, we might get caught. After three or more days, the hypochondriactical feelings become reality, we are dirty people. So why not no underwear at all ??? The clean fresh air circulating around the subject areas certainly carries off a great deal of the nastiness that the underwear would otherwise absorb and hold stored, festering, and closely pressed against us, a perfect breeding ground for all manner of germs and diseases. These things together with crabs, fleas, and cooties love dark, confined, airless places in which to thrive. I think that no underwear at all is a far healthier and cleaner proposition. Best of all; it feels good, clean, and free. This matter needs a whole bunch more thought, questioning and experimentation—a great new day may be at hand for mankind.

We call John Bell at Lackland Air Base who runs in and visits while we do laundry, but he is unable to set us up any beers or have us for supper—just soloed this day and is broke, had to treat the officer's club for drinks all day and we are out of luck. We head on down the road, make good camp west of Langtry.

7/27 Wednesday Up early and make it to Big Bend National Park. Hot like hell, even early. Driving across the flat desert entrance, a gigantic tarantula the size of a grapefruit stomps out into the road and stops to bar our way. We again screech to a halt and roll up the windows. Happily, he checks us out, approves, and



stomps off upon on his way, letting us enter the park. Stopped along the way to visit a fossil display, bones in place in the desert floor, neat. A Smokey stops and visits with us, real good talk with him, he takes us off into the brush to show us peyotes growing happily away all around us, gives us appropriate cautions not to disturb the flora and fauna. Set up camp at Big Basin, a mile high basin nestled way up the mountains, fine place and out of the desert heat. Loafed around and enjoyed. Then to Boquillas Canyon down on the river, climbed up to cliff edges, cave holes, poked around. Thren wades the Rio Grande and illegally re-enters Mexico. Back to camp, make great spaghetti feast for supper. A half dozen bold skunks descend on us, agitatedly scooting back and forth through the campsite and under our feet at the supper table. They obviously are after our spaghetti, even take it from our hands. When an agitated, armed skunk wants something, best to give it to him.

7/28 Thursday Up and load out, head east. Stop at roadside caves in new road cut west of Langtry. Thren does one all the way, Squire makes short first drop only in same. Drive through Judge Roy Bean tourist thing, but don't feel like using precious money for admissions. Along the roadside below Langtry, we find and acquire boxes with volumes A to G of the Encyclopedia Britannica. Make early camp at Pecos River. Get talking with a bird in a big camper who turns out to be from Scott, Arkansas!! Make a stew thing for supper, but turns out lousy; however, a most pleasant evening with cool breezes, Bob playing the banjo, interesting neighbors visiting. A good camp. But, for no discernable reason, sightsee-ers kept wandering through our bedroom at midnight, 5 AM, and 6 AM. Worse than the Mexican donkeys.

Austin, Texas

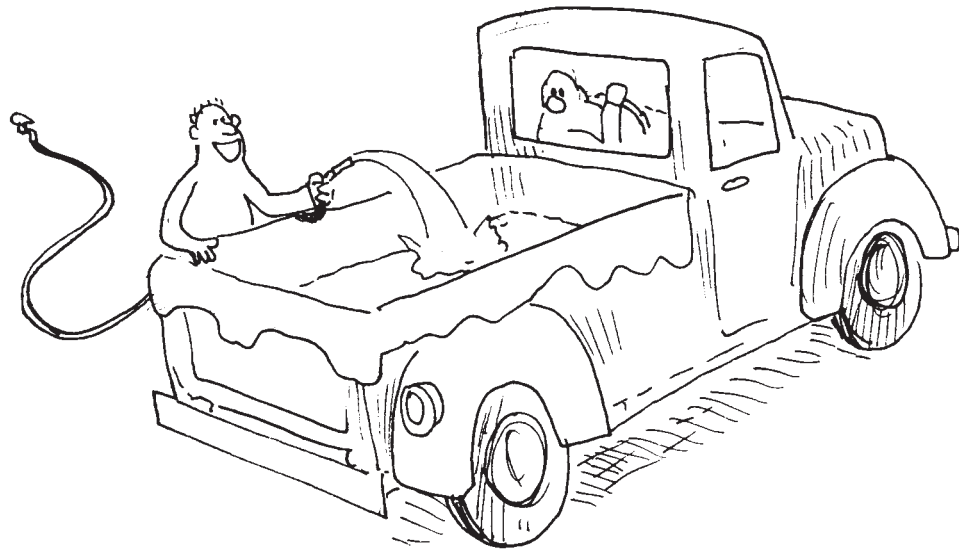
7/29 Friday On to Austin. After serious consideration and conferences, abandoned the Encyclopedia Britannicas (A to G) in front of the post office at Bracketville. Did Natural Bridge Caverns on the way past, the commercialization is now completed, an excellent job. Cave as impressive as ever. Got off the expressway in Austin and headed west across town to get to Raines'es. Found Austin does not work that simple, there are barrier parks, trees, and streams which preclude and block you from a straight shot across town. Hopelessly lost in a deteriorating neighborhood, we spot Sam and Diane Young in a front yard. Recognized Diane's red shirt and perpetual great smile, both of which she still has on, the same ones she wore all through the convention, the Xilitla trip, and, as near as we can tell, has never changed either in all this long time. Now that we have done our laundry in Del Rio, we can be judgemental concerning such things as who wears their shirt the



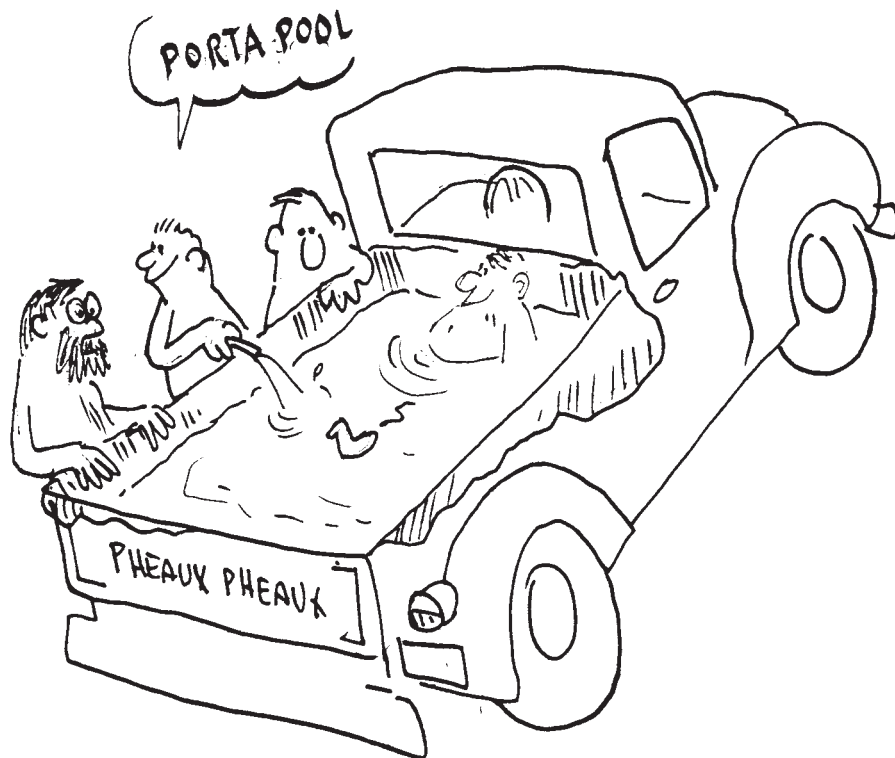


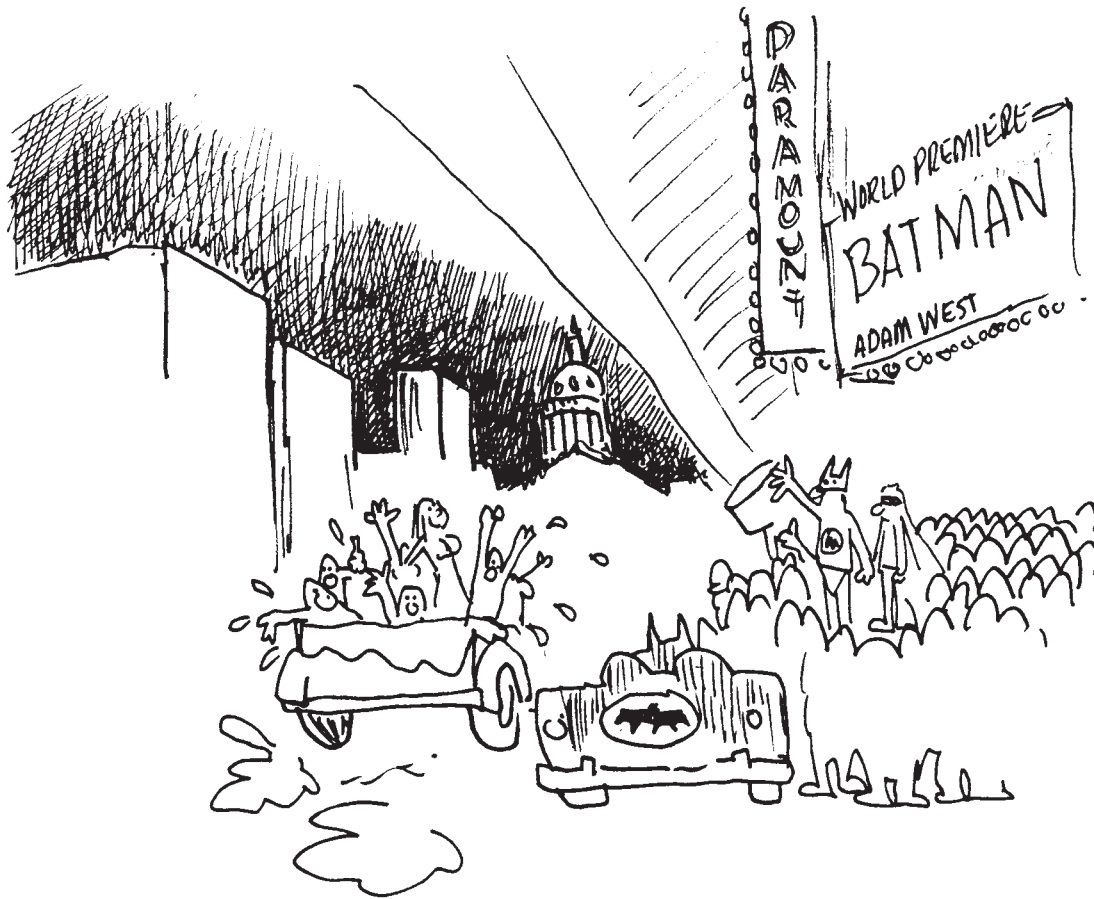
longest. Sam and Diane lead us through the intricacies of getting across town to Terry's and we all had a beer. Had Baths. Had a beer. Roonie and Sue came over. Had a beer. Roonie's legs which the doctors had to re-open to get out all the left-over rocks and gravel are healing nicely. Watched Terry's slides of the Convention. Had a beer. Watched Roonie's slides. Had a beer. By now it's about 10 Pm, about thirty people seem to have accumulated having beers. Also singing very loud, with many random instruments, and increasing lewdness. Police come in answer to neighbors' complaint. Quite nice, reasonable cops who apologize for having to bother us with such nonsense. Had a beer.

7/30 Saturday Mile 12,859 od/53,500 Up late. This day we invented the Porta-Pool which consists of a plastic tarp lining the bed of Terry's truck, fill same with water, then with people. The heavy army 4 x 4 tires support the load fine. Spent the afternoon in same. Also worked four hours moving three pickup loads and three station wagon loads of Terry's dad's papers, books, and magazines across town to his new second floor apartment. At least five and more likely ten tons of stuff for which we each got a much needed five dollars with which we all immediately bought beer which we immediately consumed to get over the moving of the stuff.



There is a moving-out party at Strick and Barbara Strickland's across town in the evening so filled the Porta-Pool and headed to same with Thren, Joe, Squire, and Pam Raines ensconced in the pool. On the way, detoured down Congress Avenue, the main drag





through the center of town where the Grand Opening Première for the Batman movie is in progress with great crowds thronging the street. Batman himself, Robin and a bunch of other appropriate dignitaries are on a big stage they've erected in front of the theatre. Driving through the crowd in front of the stage, one pretty and three bearded heads protruding with beers raised on high, sloshing water in every direction; we steal the show from Batman himself who acknowledges us with a wave and a gesture as if he wouldst dive in with us. Midst the cheers of the crowd, we splash off to the party. The party is a great success with all cramming into and enjoying the Porta-Pool and singing even lewder songs than the night before. The singing and loud party noises are surpassed by Susie Loving's screaming in her great shrill voice throughout the night for Charlie to fetch her more drink out to the Porta-pool. Richard Smith distinguishes himself winning the prize for quantity and quality in the Hey-Lydey-Oh Foul Limerick Contest Also have fine Blue Grass session (not in the Porta-Pool) with Thren and Lanny Wiggins doing banjos, Sam Young and Gene Blum on guitars.



7/31/66 Sunday Up and doped around the house. A strange place—unidentified, unusual people keep wandering through this house, front door and back door, lounging around in various rooms and parts of the grounds; they do not explain themselves, but are normally friendly. Filled the Porta-Pool late in the afternoon and went to a huge natural swimming park at some big springs in a big park right on the edge of town. A really excellent advantage taken of a fantastic natural setting. Raines shows how to get in free by parking around behind and walking through a little patch of woods. Bitter cold spring water, feels great in the sweltering heat. Many other fine natural phenomena in evidence. Texas sure does have a plethora of gorgeous ladies. Home, some beers, and early to bed.

8/1/66 Monday Up early. Planned to split for Baton Rouge today, but were commanded to stay an extra day to attend the 100th Anniversary of Scholz's Beer Garden featuring big frosted mugs of beer for five cents and pitchers for thirty cents from 9 AM to 9 PM—too good to pass up. Loafed around the house in AM. John Fish stopped by, we talked Mexico until about 11:45 AM when he headed over to the University. We decided that instead of walking through the University to Scholz's at this time, we must first do our laundry. As we are walking the half block up to the Ching Wong laundromat, great bursts of gunfire commence from

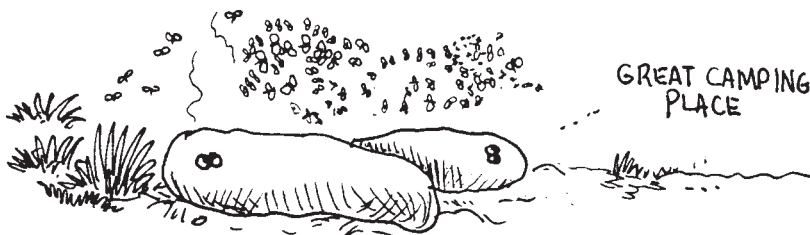
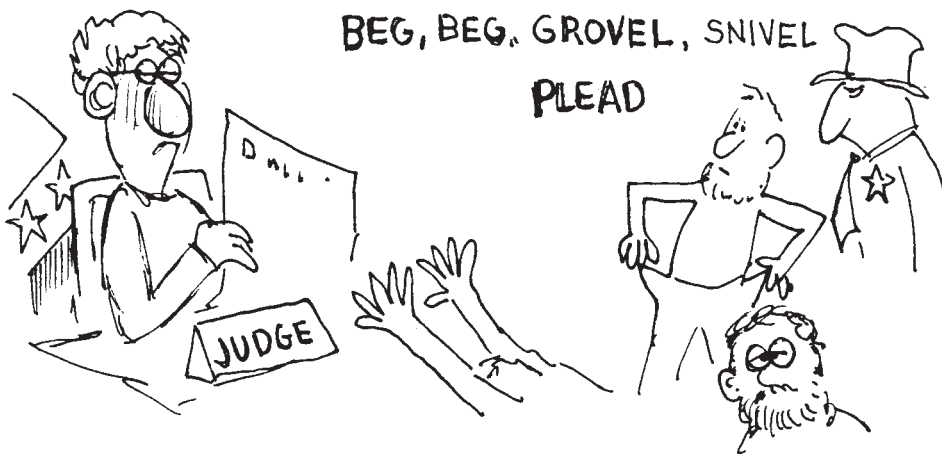
the vicinity of the UT Tower, about three blocks away. We speculate as to what foolery the Texans are up to now, and proceed to the laundromat. Get our laundry started and some guy rushes in, announces that someone is shooting people from the top of the Tower, and turns on the TV. By now it sounds like a regular war outside. When we hear a shot outside, we can see a puff of smoke or dust fly off the Tower on the TV (we can look out the door and see the same thing). We debate going over to see if we can help. but when we see folks getting killed trying to help the downed people, we decide to stay put. This guy is killing people at four blocks distance, where we are is only three blocks away. By now half the town has grabbed a gun and is blasting away at the Tower; there are as many citizens shooting back at the guy as there are cops, but he is firing through drainholes and no one can get a good shot at him. The cops fly by firing away at him from a cropduster-type bi-plane, but are driven away after he hits the plane a couple of times. After about two hours, an off-duty cop and a private citizen get to the observation deck with the guy and shoot it out with him, killing him dead. By now he has shot about forty two people and killed thirteen or more of them. Our laundry is done so we head back to the house, then to Scholz's (the long way around). The rest of the cavers, most of whom have been at the University all day, congregate in the beer garden per schedule and the details of the day are re-hashed. Terry was trapped throughout in his office in the basement of the Tower, John Fish, who had just left us, was chased from his car by gunshots to hiding, lying behind a low wall, Richard Smith rushes to the scene and is also promptly pinned down. Pregnant girl from the party last night has been shot, loses the baby, and is in critical condition. Terry's mother-in-law has her office window by her desk shot out. Barbara Strickland was trapped in the ticket office of the auditorium right beside the Tower. Scholz's runs out of beer three or four times, but always seems to find more. All in all, the Anniversary is a grand mob scene, but the horrendous overtones of the day never quite leave the party.

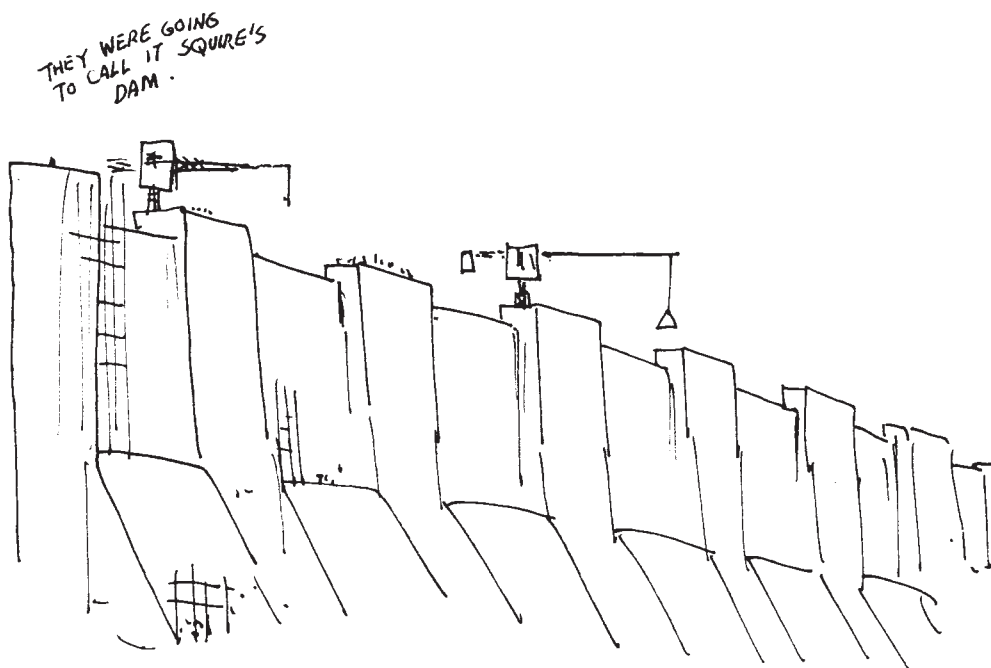
Arkansas

8/2 Tuesday Got off late for Baton Rouge after Joe makes some purchases, necessitating repacking the car. Caught in a road block/license check just before leaving Texas. Thren's license is still at the Memo Bar in Acapulco. Despite all our long stories and whining, the Justice of the Peace fines Bob five dollars for no license and having a beard; at least, we succeed in talking him down to the five dollars instead of his usual fifteen. We proceed on our way and spend a totally miserable, skeeter-ridden, hot, humid night wrapped tight inside our sleeping bags in the steaming hot bayou country of Louisiana. Equals, but does not surpass, the dreadful night in the Thousand Lakes country of Minnesota.

8/3 Wednesday Mile 13,396 od/54,038 Make it to Glenn Merrill's in Baton Rouge in mid-afternoon and are generously beered and superbly fed by his wife on gourmet Swedish meatballs and other haut cuisine delicacies. Glenn makes us excellent after-dinner drink combining milk, scotch, and creme de cocoa. Saw his recent slides of James Cave, fine gossiping and reminiscing. Was real fine having a civilized meal for once.

8/4 Thursday Up to a Class A breakfast of Huevos Rancheros, sausage, and cornbread. Went to the University and saw Glenn's work on his doctorate, very impressive. Took off for Little Rock. (The construction job, Lock & Dam #6 on the Arkansas River, where Squire was job materials man and which he quit to go on this trip, is located at Scott, Arkansas, a tiny cotton gin town about ten miles below Little Rock. Extreme good fellowship is anticipated with his old job buddies, a few of whom he had converted into cavers in order to have someone to cave the Ozarks with while working there). Enjoyed watching cropdusters doing their stuff and dive-bombing us all along the way. North along the Mississippi





and through the bayou country to Little Rock. Hit Suzie Ralston's about 6 PM. Bob and Joe abandoned at the house while Squire and Suzie went for charcoal, but ended up going to the jobsite in Scott instead. Saw Ed Cobb and a bunch of the boys, couldn't stay long. Back at the house, Pat had come in, got acquainted with Bob and Joe, and they are all beering it up and lying to each other. Pat charcoals giant steaks for us and a fine meal with Suzie messing up the salad just like old times. Jake, Bud Bindell, Barb, Bob Wadhams and wife all come in, followed by Ed Cobb and Marge. Much beer consumed till the wee hours.

8/5 Friday Up and to Jobe's skid row cafe for breakfast. Big T-bone steak, two eggs, huge mound of hash-browns, juice, toast, and coffee still only seventy five cents. To bank, got money, squared up the pot. Went downriver to Scott, got mail. Went to Stracener's Grocery and drank beer, Easter is the only one to recognize Squire under his by-now firmly established beard and with crew cut grown out. Once they know who I am and that we are not hippy freaks, we are roundly welcomed with beers all around. Back to town and bought four used tires for twenty five dollars. Back to Stracener's by quitting time, met Jerry, Jake, and Bud; drank more beers. Will Rogers, Sammy Jackson come in, more beers. Played shuffleboard with local boys. Back to Suzie's. Pat and Suzie, Bud and Marge, us all go to the Gar Hole for ribs. Afterwards are refused entrance to Officer's Club because Joe and



Bob have on blue jeans, scene nearly turns ugly, but cool heads persevere. We head back down to Scott again and Stracener's Grocery which is where we belonged in the first place. By now the Friday night hillbilly/bayou band and all the folks have arrived and are dancing and whooping it up bayou-country Arkansas style. As per local custom, the white folks do their hell-raising inside at the grocery counters and the black folks have their big party out on the large covered front porch. Both sides seem to enjoy each other and seem to have a great time interacting together within their rigidly drawn, locally understood lines, over which neither side passes; old timey, rigid segregation definitely still prevailed. We find friends on both sides. A grand party and a good time had by all among people who appreciate blue jeans and beards so long as they are clearly identified as hillbilly, not hippy beards—there is a very definite element of danger here and these folks are accustomed to handling their own affairs as they see fit and not shy about it. Josh and his buddy put on quite a show trying to con Bob and Joe into card games, fortunately, they have been well forewarned. At the end of the evening, we forego the invitation to go frog gigging back in the bayou—it would seem less than wise at this point in time for us all to arm with long sharp tridents, climb in small tin boats, and wander out into the black cypress swamp among the water mocassins and other slimey, crawly beasties.

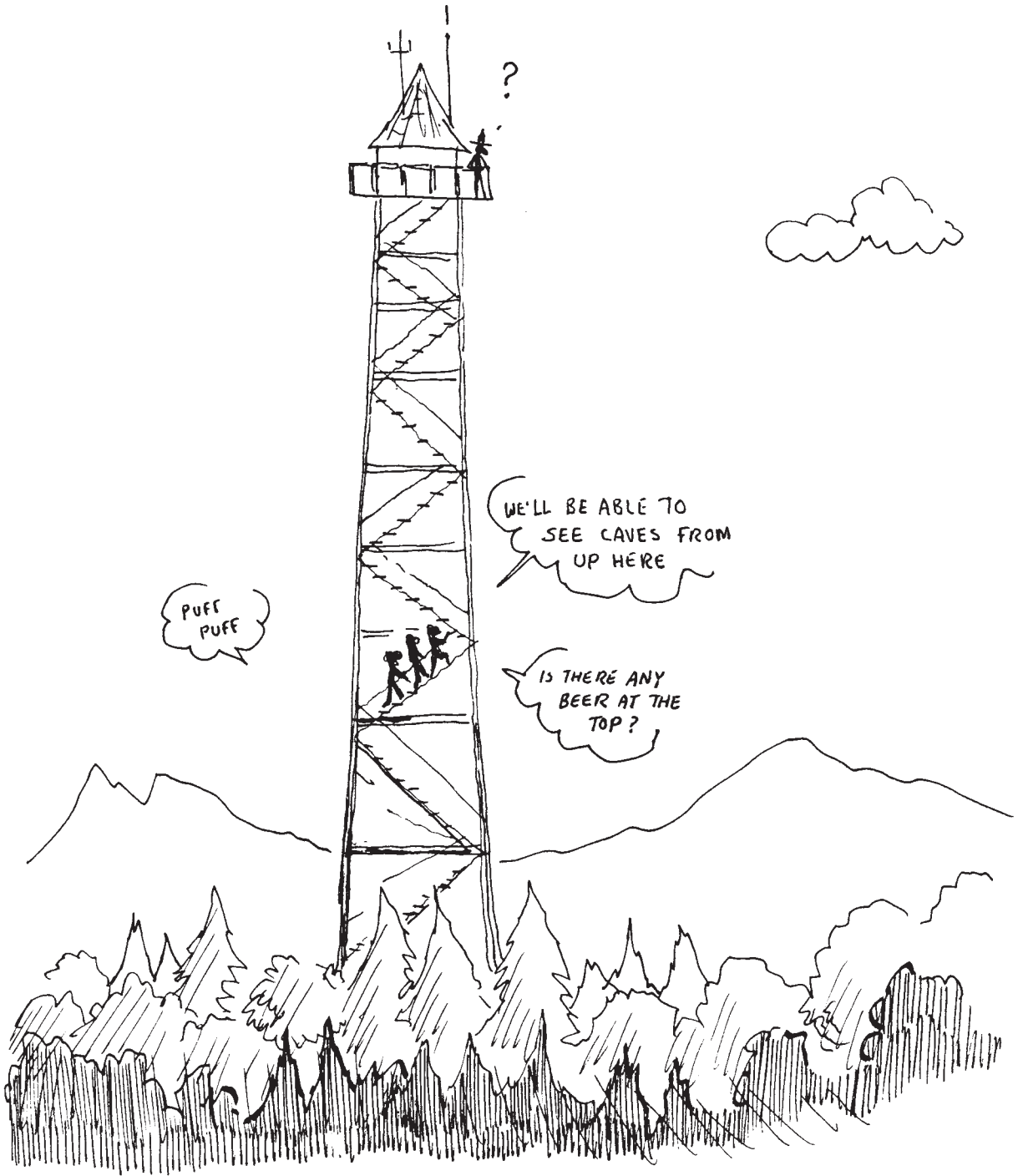
8/6 Saturday Load out and goodbyes by noon. Go to Minolta camera shop where Squire's camera was supposed to be shipped, they have no interest whatever in trying to locate same. To the Toltec Indian mounds down between Scott and Keo where all hunt artifacts with limited success and climb mounds. Stop by Estell's Grocery to stock up on Big Daddy wine, successfully negotiate for five half pints and five full pints of same, four dollars for the lot. Drink some beers and Whitey LaNear comes in, so drink more beers. Finally take off for Blanchard Springs about 9 PM, arrive at Fifty Six after midnight. Find and set up camp at Harclerode's barn at Rowland Cave out in the woods below Fifty Six. Go into cave, quick trip through the old commercial section with Coleman lantern, some short poking around off the trail with flashlights. And to bed.

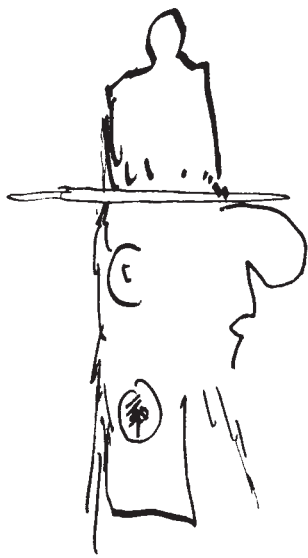


Sunday 8/7/66 through Friday 8/12/66: Another period with daily activity precluding regular logbook keeping until we get back on the road. We use Harclerode's barn on the abandoned farm at Rowland Cave as headquarters. Nothing remains of the long-ago burned-down house. This is an old Arkansas caver rendezvous in a hollow, way back a dirt road in the woods at the old closed-down,

primitively commercialized Rowland Cave. The following activities occurred in the time span, Joe abstaining from most caves due to wetness of caves and ill health, perhaps associated with apathy due to terminal case of missing his true love.

1. Rowland Cave—did all passage back to pool drop. Did left hand passage back to pools requiring boats. Did right hand passage back to T junction, right of T to crawl, and left of T to Rowland Lakes.
2. Cartwright Cave—upstream to Virgin Helectite Room, downstream to helectite crawl plus two or three other canyon side passages.
3. Roasting Ear Cave—all of cave.
4. Haunted Cave—all of cave including Dome Pits and chimney canyon. This day, Sunday, met Jake and Bud who came up from Little Rock, Marge not able to come at last minute. Got lost hunting cave due to Squire's infallible memory. Bud's car distinguishes itself by having four flats. After spending the day hunting the cave and fixing flats, they must return to Little Rock without ever getting into the cave which by now we have found. Bob and Squire in alone.
5. Gustafson's Cave—Found with aid of a nearby studio photographer with whom we have coffee and enjoy swapping Mexican tales; he and his wife make regular trips to Acapulco and some interesting non-tourist places. Squire misses doing most of cave after large rotten stalamite being used as handhold breaks on a climb dropping him about three feet onto a ledge with about a thirty pound piece cracking his left kneecap and about a twenty pound piece destroying right calf muscle. Joe and Thren discover second entrance to this cave.
6. When climbing a fire tower in Ozark National Forest, make friends with ranger. He takes us to the acting superintendent and tries to get us an OK to do Half Mile Cave which is gated up tight pending government development. No success due to real superintendent being on vacation and the acting guy too gung-ho about rules to act on his own authority—nice guy though and have long talk with him and the other Smokey.
7. Enjoy great swimming at Blanchard Springs and Gunner's Pool, getting invited to free supper with a large family camped at Blanchard. Slightly a up-tight strain to us as they are super-



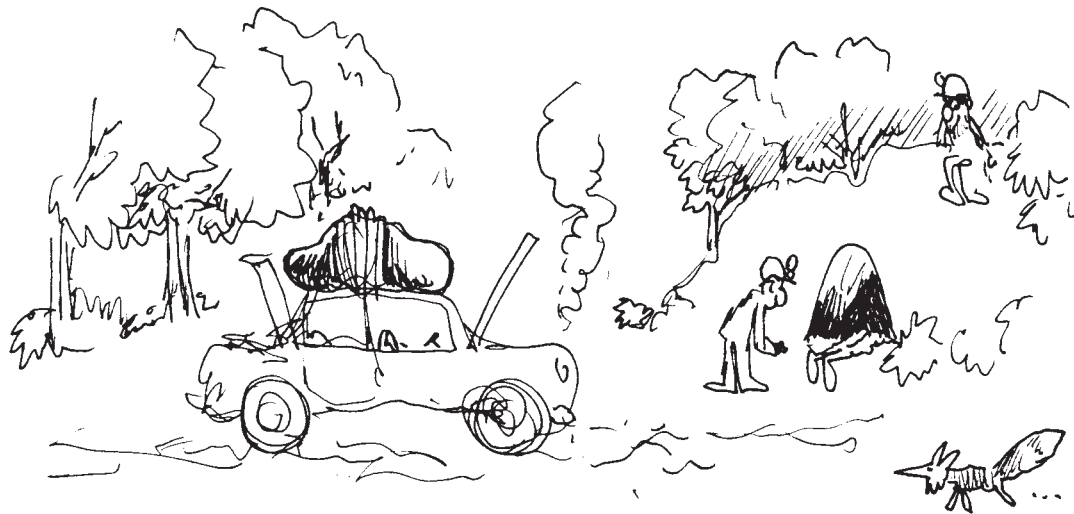


RULE NUMBER B-106-3
NO BEARDED PEOPLE CANNOT
ENTER



straight, salt-of-the-earth types; but we gorge ourselves bountifully on the abundant home-cooked foodstuffs, pay our way with thrilling tales of our adventures and banjo playing, and are able to beat an early retreat. A fine windfall as we totter off to our sleeping bags—we are spending this night under the big shelter cave at the springs.

8. Spent the entire week without booze of any type from Saturday night until we got to Huntsville, Alabama the following Saturday night, due to entering the totally dry Ozarks with no supply and no contacts to acquire the locally made beverages. The Big Daddy is being saved for Oldtimer's in West Virginia. No noticeable strain on anyone, we must not yet any of us be too far advanced alcoholics.
9. Bob and Squire go back into Blanchard Springs resurgence to belly deep water, cold like hell and continuing deepening of water deters further efforts. Checked out several side crawlways.
10. At Roasting Ear Cave while waiting outside, laying up on the trunk of the car, Joe has a fox come out of the bushes and walk unsuspectingly by him within a foot.
11. Old Man Harclerode and wife suspect us of breaking into the old abandoned cave office and looting rock collection, but we are able to get them to recognize Squire behind the beard,



ROASTING EAR CAVE

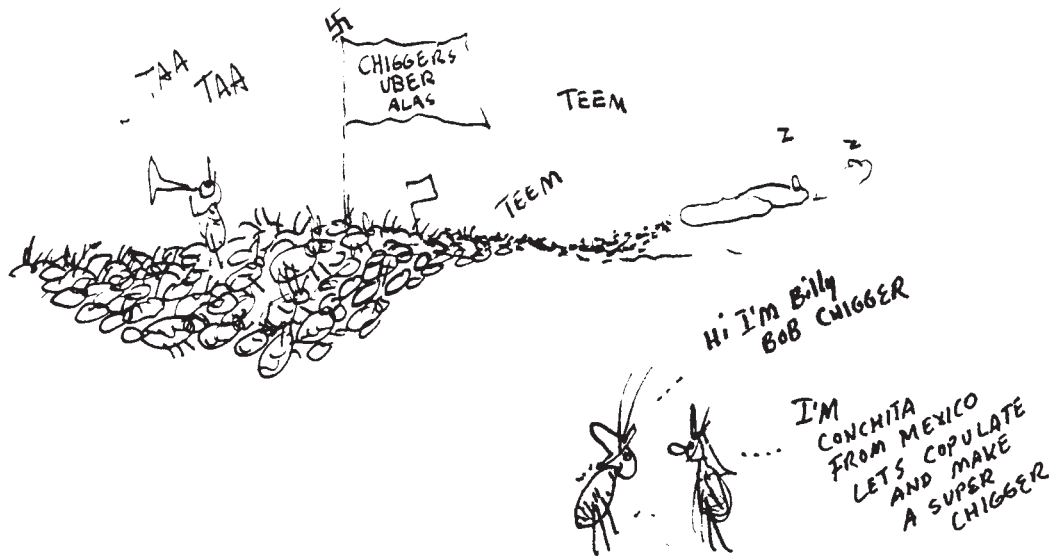
believe in our innocence, and make friends. He says we should have taken the several groups of Touri who occasionally blunder into the hollow through the cave and collect the fees for ourselves. Wouldst we had, the exchequer is very low.

12. One night of note when we are awakened in the barn by a sudden, outrageous, unexplained conglomeration of animals stamping about, honking, tweeting, and variously and loudly voicing their opinions. Including, but not limited to rats, cows, whipporwills, owls and ten million varieties of shrieking insects and including bird-like beings swooping through the bedroom stalls. It is a continuing mystery as to what brought all this about. The critters know, but we do not.
13. Towards the middle of the week, the rats learn to stay away from our sleeping bags after Thren slugs one and we all start keeping a stash of stones by our sides to rock them with during the night.
14. The night we spent at the Blanchard Springs shelter cave. we are all beset by the most terrifying, urgent, overwhelming attack of chiggers, ever encountered by human folk anywhere, anytime. We are all well experienced chigger experts, these surpass our accumulated experience. Squire has extensive past relationships with Ozark chiggers, which are chiggers to be proud of; but these far exceed the norm. Our best theory is that some of our Tlamaya chiggers have hidden all this long



time in waiting, then while our Ozark chiggers were innocently browsing about on us, leaped out, raped them, and hatched out a hybrid race of hundreds of super chiggers which are now savagely devouring us from head to toe. Whatever the cause of the phenomena, we are forced screaming from our beds in the middle of the night, drive at least ten miles into Mountain View and finally locate nail polish with which to attack them. We emergency treat each other on the spot. Back at the camp, stripped naked, the operation is repeated from stem to stern. The enemy is vanquished, relief achieved. (Mountain View does not stock nor understand why anyone would want colorless nail polish, this seems silly to them. Our entire bodies are now artistically decorated with Maybelline brilliant cherry red).

15. Beside the regular cave-finding trips through the back woods, we make several trips driving miles and miles back the unending dirt mountain roads which wind forever back through



the ravines, mountains, valleys, and across the rivers of the Ozarks. This is a large, very beautiful, relatively untouched country with most of the people back here descendants of the original settlers and living on the old family homesteads in the old self-sufficient way. So far the vacationers and developers have kept out and left them alone.

16. We find a place called City Rocks Bluff, a high bluff way up above a bend in the White River which was an old Indian flint working place. Covered with millions of chips. Many people worked here for many years. Spend a delightful few hours prowling around the area, find a bunch of broken points. Bob, the keen-eyed expert, finds a few perfect points. This site has really great vibes, it is very conducive to transporting the mind and body back in time.

17. Last day, after many trips each carrying out our gear from the barn, across the old cattle guard to the car; Joe, the naturalist, notices nestled comfortably under the wide-spaced cattle guard bars, the biggest Copperhead snake ever recorded, nervously flicking his tongue and bad-eying us from strike position. We have been tromping directly over his head all morning and, probably, all week. Well, it would be very touchy capturing him live through the cattle guard and we elect to forego outright killing him inasmuch as he has quite

considerately chosen not to kill us throughout the week. Turn about is fair play, laissez faire, and ultra conservation are, after all, the name of the game. Go in peace, brother.

Huntsville, Alabama

8/13 Saturday Mile 14,542 od/55,184 Load out and onward to Alabama. Of note was hilarious scene in Memphis of a black guy proceeding down the main street in full beautiful suit and tie with a gigantic, peak crowned straw Mexican tourist sombrero completely enveloping his head and down over his eyes and ears. It will remain a life-long mystery as to what he was up to. Made it to Huntsville, Bill Cuddington's, they're not home. Hit Billy Garrison's about 5 or 6 PM. Enjoyed some of his new batch of home-brew, our first booze in a week. Schaefer comes in, goes and gets Chris Kroeger, and after some more home brews, proceed to hot dog roast at Bob Ware's where all enjoy the festivities. Present are Charlie Nork, Tom Sawyer, Ed Alexander, Larry McClinnon, Bob Schaefer, Wade Ewing, Bob Clark, Garrison, and a splendid collection of lovely ladies. We fail as arsonists with the Great Burning Attempt of Ware's Bird House. The hot dogs are consumed. After appropriate dissolution and degradation at Ware's, back to Garrison's where the party continues with extended variations of debauchery.

8/14/66 through 8/31/66: Once again Logbook is set aside pending time on the road to catch up. Following events highlight the period:

1. Re-establish our rapport with Mrs. Vandergrift, the owner of our old Huntsville headquarters at 1902 Tollgate Road which is the old abandoned two story, two room stone house that was the gate keeper/toll collector's house way back when the road to the top of Monte Sano Mountain was a toll road. Thren, Joe, and Squire were hunting a home here on a trip in 1965 and found this little old house standing open and empty. At that time, located Mrs. Vandergrift and made a deal that we would



board up the windows and seal it against vandals if we could use it during our stay. It was a good deal for both parties then and now she is glad to let us use it again. We happily move in, clean up, and settle down for the duration.

2. Huntsville stay is primarily dominated by visitor's hour at the Tollgate House. Starting about 4 PM every afternoon, various friends, cavers, neighbors, and assorted personnel start stopping in, continuing through into whatever hour of the night—some bearing miscellaneous un-labelled beverages and some grubbing whatever peculiar or strange liquids might be under consumption at the time. The Huntsville and Paint Rock Valley Grottos have an old, long standing tradition and competition of manufacturing their own homemade drinking materials and are constantly coming up with new, unusual, and mysterious consumables. A big status symbol is to acquire large issuances of government surplus "commodities" as handed out to the poor and see how much of it they can convert into wine. Naturally in the course of research and experimentation, a great many batches of pretty nasty stuff is produced; however, it is de rigueur to consume all offerings and affect great appreciation. None goes to waste. We enjoy excellent eats



during this period, primarily prepared with fresh meats and veg'es, yet find it necessary to prepare huge vats of same as all and sundry of our drop-in guests are, of course, extended hospitality and soon learn the highly developed extents of our culinary talents. We are soon feeding half of Huntsville.

2. Enjoy the first Sunday visiting Tom Sawyer and Nancy Walters at their new place out on the Paint Rock River. They've bought an old abandoned 1920's fish camp with numerous old ramshackled shacks, near Hollytree, out in the woods with the Paint Rock River running through. The day highlighted by Sawyer's awful wine and a delightful swim wherein we are introduced to Huntsville-style mixed skinny dipping. The ladies of this gang sure are beautiful.
3. Second Sunday in town produces a gala Goat Roast at Larry McClinnon's co-sponsored by Chris Kroeger, featuring a mighty supply of free beer, but an even mightier supply of beer consumers. Goat was delicious, but unfortunately burned in re-heating by Rondia, who redeems herself with exotic, sensual Flamenco/Toreador dancing opposite the Squire. We suffer severe traumatic reverses from losing an all night competition with Kroeger for the attentions of the delightful Marcy Ware. Marcy's approach to the Ladies' Room entertain all—she thinks the Ladies' Room is wherever she happens to be standing at the moment. To the amazement of all, Larry



passes out about 1 AM, a hitherto unknown occurrence—Big Daddy wine strikes again. The bonfire is enjoyed by all, standing around it in the rain. The dawn breaks on an appalling scene with Alexander on the front porch on top of his sleeping bag clad only in his skivvys, Thren beside him with great beard projecting from his sleeping bag, Joe's two dirty-sock clad feet sticking out of the Rambler window midst gargantuan snores, Squire on the front lawn under his serape with sundry other distorted bodies scattered about, all amidst a fearful array of debris, goat bones, and beer bottles. We are a public disgrace, it must be the fault of the Paint Rock group and we must take steps to restore our high standards of decorum. These folks must be indoctrinated into proper public control and Greater Guano Grotto extreme good fellowship standards. After an early breakfast, Thren and Alexander stagger off to do Never Hole. Kroeger, McClinnon, Steve Ware, Joe and Squire have beers, Big Daddy, and McClinnon Martinis. Head back to Garrison's about 4 PM and all enjoy home brew, thus making it through a day that there was considerable doubt any of us would survive.

4. Third Saturday distinguished itself with an excellent party at Wade and Barbara Ewings, highlighted by Nork's pagan idol building, beer can fights, an unidentified intoxicant swinging on the porch swing until he could touch the ceiling, then flying off it backwards, cracking his skull and requiring a hospital run before he can continue with the party. His eyes never did uncross and he was last seen wandering off across a field.
5. Bill Biggers and Mike Kelley arrive 8/25/66. Thursday, and join the activities.
6. The following caving interspersed throughout the period:
 - a. Never Hole—Thren and Alexander.
 - b. Natural Wells—Biggers, Alexander, Mike Kelley, 2 kids from D.C. with Cuddington and Squire on top.
 - c. Fern—Cuddington, Biggers, Alexander, 2 D.C. kids.
 - d. Limrock Blowing—Thren, Biggers, Mike, Squire.
 - e. Valhalla—Biggers, Mike, Alexander, Cuddington, others ? plus Guess Cave, Newsome Sinks.
7. Joe departs Friday, 8/26/66 via bus to meet Jo Ann somewhere near Blacksburg, West Virginia.

8. After a planned cave trip fails due to hellacious downpour and flooding danger, Cuddington takes Thren and Squire home for a fine visit and a fabulous meal by Mickey.
9. Bill and Mickey bring a great and delicious baked ham to Garrisons' on our last day, 8/30/66, which makes a fantastic feast for all.
10. A great debt is owed Bob Schaefer for open use of his house for showers, toilets, filling water jugs, etcetera each day during our stay.
(Tollhouse lacks water, electric, other such non-essential amenities).
11. A memorable afternoon spent at the Tollhouse with the old neighbor lady visiting us who used to live in the house. She is clairvoyant, afternoon is devoted to tales of this stuff, ghosts, and to all of Huntsville's great past scandals, some of which are mighty impressive. Joe Williams in attendance, Ed and Chris later on.
12. On Sunday, 8/28, Cuddington appears with two teeny-boppers from the D.C. Swine in tow who have imposed themselves on him to help them do Fern. They have arrived with no car, no gear, no money, and, obviously, no vertical experience. We bad-mouth Bill roundly for getting himself into this spot and take them to Natural Wells to give them a try-out. Do so with Biggers and Alexander going down with them, Cuddington and Squire staying on top. Second kid requires bottom belay going in, takes forty minutes and much whining coming out. Both have trouble with their gear. Despite this, Bill sets up Monday night to take them into Fern. With Biggers and Alexander assisting, trip is made without accident, but much mental strain on all involved. Their only interest turns out to be not necessarily doing the cave, but have their names signed in the bottom register. Never again.

Tennessee > West Virginia > Pennsylvania

8/31 Wednesday Mile 15,438 od/56,080 Depart north from Garrisons' about noon with Biggers and Mike following. Drive through to Ducktown, Tennessee, arrive Jim Hixon's about 5 PM. He doesn't show up. so we make supper about 7 PM, enjoying some fine Vienna bread he has obviously left for us. Nearly kill ourselves testing by smell some milk in his refrigerator, it is easily a year old. His house, as usual, totally defies description, the old drive shaft and rear axle is still in the middle of the kitchen floor awaiting whatever he has in mind for it. Kitchen sink and table are discovered under the piles of dishes and engine pistons, we start to clean up but give up, can't find a starting place and would probably just disturb or displace important projects for him. We will be good guests and not mess with his stuff. He finally arrives about 9 PM with Bobbi Nagy right behind, a joyous reunion. Beer run is made and we destroy a case recapping each other's events of the summer. And so to bed.

9/1 Thursday Jim comes back from work and a delightful breakfast omelette is made with onion, cheese, mushrooms, bacon, and olives. Jim takes us to the mine and we sight-see the famous Ducktown devastation. The copper mines and ore refining exude noxious fumes which pervade the atmosphere and have poisoned hundreds of acres of the countryside. The beautiful, rolling Tennessee woodlands, hills, and valleys are dessicated, skeletal wasteland, brown and sere; but more than brown, it is a diseased, poisonous coloration; more than just the sight, there is a smell, a feel, an aura of nastiness and danger to the place, we are holding our breath, breathing shallowly, touching nothing, and want nothing more than to get away from here and thoroughly



DUCK, DUCK, WHERE HAVE THEY ALL GONE?



wash ourselves off. A bad place, indeed, and there is absolutely no excuse for this mindless destruction. It is inconceivable to imagine that whatever they are doing to the atmosphere is allowed to go on or that people actually live here all the time. For how many years has this been happening ??

We take off about 11 AM and head for the Smokeys. Go through Cope's Cove, a beautiful preservation of old times and ways, the operating, wood-cogged mill is excellent. Church's old graveyard with ancient slate headstones takes us back in time and puts real people into the setting. Then to the top of Clingman's Dome, unfortunately, mist shrouds all views; but this gives its own eery feel and ethos of mystery and romance to the mountains and the surroundings. We will take this special sensation with us and see the panoramic views another day. Biggers and Mike split for Blacksburg about 2 PM. Squire and Thren continue poking around the mountains till about 5 Pm, then on towards Roanoke, camp east of Bristol.

9/2 Friday Up early and on the way. Cut over above Roanoke to Fincastle and the Blue Grass Festival. Re-unite with Joe and JoAnn. Also there down from Pennsylvania are George Shindelbeck, Jim Bollman, Ray Weaver and more. I generally take vehicles as they come. I demand good tires, brakes, and steering mechanism and, so long as it will start and take me where I choose to go, the rest can be in almost any form. However, this Shindelbeck has a vehicle that I shall want for the rest of my days. The rather unknown and rare Morgan plus four two-seater has always been the sports car of my dreams. Well, he has a *four*-seater. It is the most elegant, coolest, and strangest looking vehicle ever to pass before my eyes. I shall covet it forever. At the least I shall have the pleasure of being around it during our time here. Festival is the usual great scene, all the folks in from the hills, stage show on the rickety old stage and the real action is in the parking lot with the impromptu bands flailing away at Cripple Creek, Rocky Top, and Earl's Breakdown. We groove the scene till the early hours and finally crash, lulled to sleep with banjos, mandolins, and the thump of bass fiddles still flooding the atmosphere at top speed all around us.

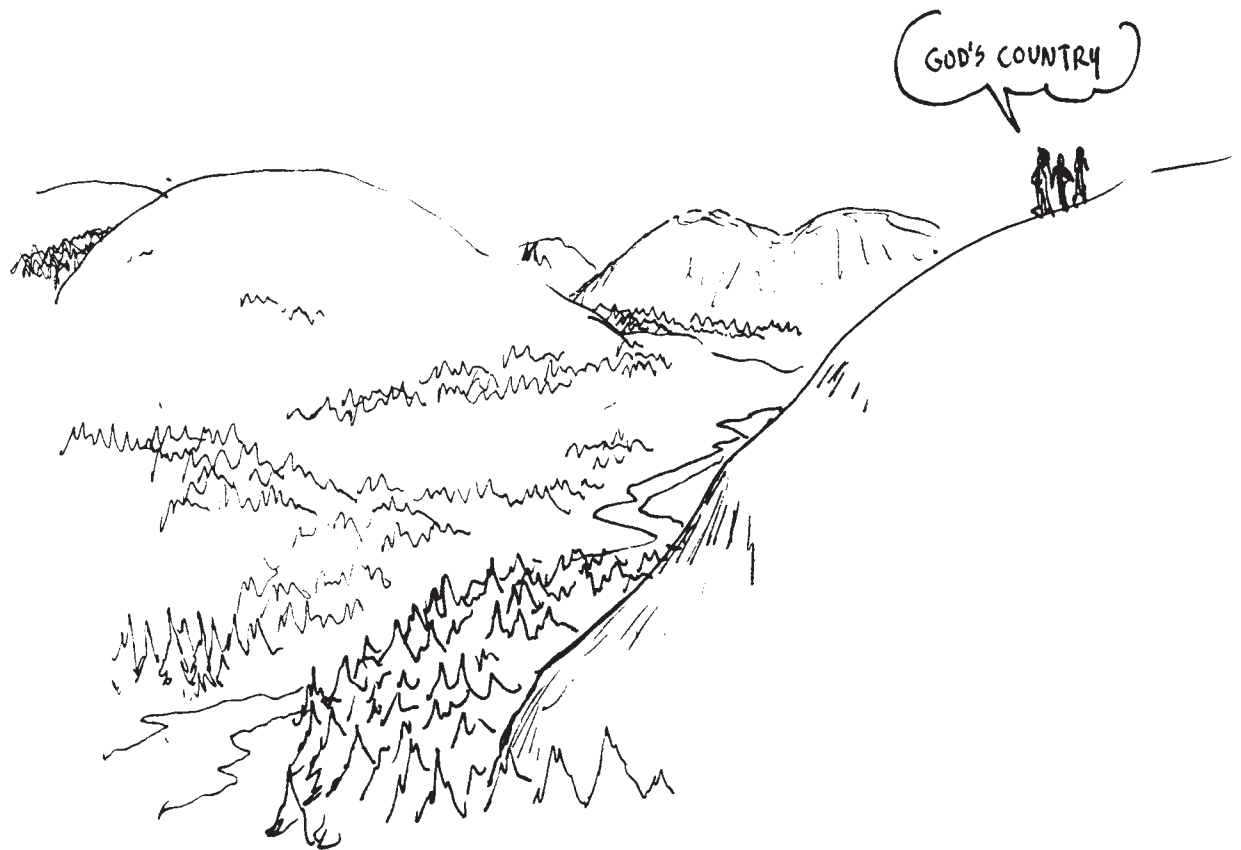
9/3 Saturday Rise to the continuing sound of God's own music, there are still a few groups having at it from the long night before. Breakfast and we hit the road through Clifton Forge and up Rte 220. How fine to be back in our old stamping grounds again and how beautiful they are—all the wonderous and incredible places

BLUE GRASS FESTIVALS
IN THE EARLY DAYS.
THERE WAS A CONCERT AT EVERY FOURTH
CAR... TODAY IT'S ALL CITY ASS HOLES



we've passed through and lived in these long past months have had their own very special feeling and drama—to us, the feel of the Appalachians is warmth, soft beauty, and home. On up the valley through Monterey and finally drop down into Franklin, West Virginia and the Oldtimers' Convention at the campground above the Mill. We are back.

All the gang is here in force to welcome us—Hester and Jerry, Grayson, Tom, Jay Herbein, Dale Ibberson, Phil Gettels, Ray



Bishop, Hixon, Nagy, Biggers, Kelley, Rick Nelson, Sanford, Rus, Stellmack, Jonesy, Haars, Whittemores, all the PSC, Pittsburgh, State College gangs and everybody else, a cast of thousands. Party through the night and to bed where and when we find it.

9/4 Sunday Thren and Squire up early and back down to Fincastle and the Blue Grass Festival, day and night spent soaking up same. Show is stolen by a little two foot high kid fiddler outdoing all the big folks on Orange Blossom Special. We crash fairly early, about midnight, the pace is getting to us.

9/5 Monday Up early and breakfast to the ongoing parking lot bands, these guys haven't quit in four days. Back up to Franklin and the Oldtimers. Loaf around and party through the day. We are unfairly cheated of our just rights at the banquet. Honor and Glory are denied us. We wouldst lay claim to the annual Who-Came-The-Farthest-Distance-To-Oldtimers Award. We say that we left Reading, Pennsylvania on Memorial Day to come to the Oldtimers and just took a little extra loop in getting here—through Wyoming,



TO HELL WITH THE
ECOLOGY... DAMN
THE BUGS

California, Arizona, Texas, Xilitla, Acapulco, Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama and to Franklin—some 16,550 miles. They deny this truthful, honest claim and instead give the award to Stan Carts's wife who flew up from Guatemala, which we question that her sole purpose in coming was to come to Oldtimers. Political corruption is suggested when it is considered that Stan was one of the big boss organizers of Oldtimers this year. Well, can't win 'em all; but next year we will not take such a long, hard way in getting here. The final, heavy duty partying proceeds into the night and we crash, having accomplished nearly all that we set out to do. Time to go home.

9/6/66 Tuesday A surprise awakening for Squire. The gang is sitting around him as he peacefully sleeps in the middle of the hard packed dirt campground; they are watching to see what he will do about the several yellow jackets that are buzzing around over him. Wakening, he senses that all is not well and becomes aware of an loud, ominous, rumbling hum beneath him. He leaps from the bag and all flee in every direction fast as feet will fly as a great stream of furious, revenge-bent yellow jackets burst forth from the underground nest on top of which Squire has made his bed.

Ultra conservation can be carried too far. We rally our forces, borrow Coleman fuel, and incinerate the nasty little crappers. With the picnic table and cooking gear reclaimed, we breakfast on all the food we have left and load out. A final beer and we split for Reading close to noon. Arrive at Thren's 6 PM, Marylou is waiting for Squire; warm, warm welcomes with hugs and kisses for all from her and Mom Thren.

Return Reading, Pennsylvania 6 PM, September 6, 1966 Odometer 57,464.

Three months & three days, 16,822 miles, 21 U.S. states, 7 Mexican states, .

Finis

EPILOGUE

Bob called his girl with Taxco silver in hand to find she had dumped him for another while we were away, too bad for her. Bob continued worked around Reading, caved Germany Valley and the Appalachians whenever he got some money saved and made the regionals and conventions. In 1967, he went along to help out on one of the first trips into Sotano de San Augustín in Huautla. In the mid-seventies, he acquired and moved down to a two thousand dollar vertical patch of woods with a shack way back in a hollow in the mountains behind Lexington, Virginia and spent a lot of his time playing with other back-in-the-hills, front-porch blue grass folks and making reproductions of old flintlock rifles. Finally, he met April, they eventually got married and are happily ensconced in an up-graded, incredibly fine, old 1800's homestead way back at the end of another nearby hollow in the heart of the Virginia/West Virginia cave and blue grass country. Ups and downs, however, do occur in the most happily ensconced relationships, particularly if caver-oriented.

Joe got engaged to Jo Ann, they had a sometimes-stormy relationship for a year or two and finally got married. He went after and live taped an enviable collection of Blue Grass and Old Timey music back in the mountains. Finally, he got an heavy duty job at a bank in Reading that put a cramp in quitting to go caving for weeks at a time everytime the call came. He and Jo Ann had a lot of neat kids (who are all NSS members), bought a classy house in an exclusive old-money neighborhood and joined The Country Club. At last report, they were still making regional caver conventions and blue grass festivals.

Squire and Marylou parted with regrets at the end of the year. He resigned from the Rotary, the presidency of the Republican Club,

the Magistrates Association, the volunteer fire company, the horse show committee, his Justice of the Peace-ship and went to Texas, taking the old, battered El Camino pickup, his sleeping bag, a Coleman stove, and a box of canned food. In the spring of 1967, following an dramatic saga in the best of romantic traditions, he and Nancy fled from Huntsville, settling that fall in Austin, Texas where Squire enrolled at UT, graduating in 1971, cultural anthropology. He and Nancy made many happy trips to the Loma Linda in Acapulco and prowled the U.S. every summer in the old way, chasing NSS conventions, Irish Wolfhound shows, and old caver friends. In 1970, Squire vacated his standing as the state-of-the-art drunk in the caving fraternity and joined the major alcoholics' club. They had a daughter, Cristin, in 1974; when she was ten days old, she went 1,100 miles by caver van to camp out for a week smack in the middle of the Iowa Convention. She loved it. They parted in 1978. Nancy lives with son, Corey back in Blacksburg, Virginia. Squire and daughter, Cristin, are still in Austin where Squire built up an importing business, dealing in primitive Mexican weavings, folkart, and antiques. After becoming well known in this field, he retired and now lives in a retirement home in Round Rock, Texas; where the notorious Sam Bass got his start; also the home of Old Man Wisdom.

This odyssey was the finest hour and the final bow of the Old Reading Grotto. It was love that sounded its Swan Song. Our true loves all had a good, proper caver mentality, but no one of them was about to be left home while we went off together for weeks and months at a time without them. Given the choice, we chose our true loves. We started acquiring tents, coolers, honky chairs, pee cans, and porta-cribs. We went this route because we wanted to and it's doubtful any of us would have it any other way. But I guess it's OK to remember the glory days of the Old Reading Grotto and lift a glass of mucilloid in fond memory. What one hell of a time we did have !!!!

The Greater Guano Grotto succeeded in its goal of opening dialogues and uniting the NSS Straights and the Shaggy Dogs, providing a framework within which they could appreciate, respect, and even like each other. Most of the Straights threw in the towel; they couldn't resist joining us. It was more fun to be on our side than trying to fight us. Besides which, it was the right thing to do. There were even a couple of attempts by them to get the GGG chartered into the NSS, but nothing ever came of it. It wouldn't have been a good idea anyway. The GGG was directly responsible

for getting a strong representation of working cavers on the Board of Governors. When the big dope craze swept the country in the late sixties and early seventies, the GGG set the ethos that using dope as a macho symbol was strictly for children and insecure, that it was definitely uncool and destructive to flaunt it around conventions and caving areas for the locals to identify us with, and would be generally detrimental to our goals to have the label associated with cavers. Thus the standard was established to discourage its desirability at functions, keep it strictly under cover, and use it only with dignity. The last great Ultra Conservation principle promulgated was that everyone should cave ten percent less each year. With the NSS re-united and firmly established criteria for respectable debauchery in place, the GGG quietly faded into the golden western sunset in the early seventies. However, the Giant is only sleeping, resting in a dark, quiet place not defined by geographic boundaries, its spirit and its treasury are intact, and all of its life members are still life members. Should another restless era emerge or a great need arise; tremble not, the guardian angel of right thinking is but resting....

¡ Que te vayas bien !





Squire Lewis literally raised himself from age thirteen with no family or home, so finding strange places to sleep each day and making do with strange things to eat was an early way of life for him. This cavers' modus operandi never seemed strange or took any adaptation for him.

His first ancestress in this country, Penelope Van Princis, was scalped and speared after shipwrecking on the New Jersey coast about 1619. She survived, raised 11 sons and lived to

the age of 111. Her descendants pioneered through Kentucky, arriving in central Illinois in 1837. On his mother's side, the Widow Loveland settled in Connecticut in 1635, her descendants sailed and captained tall ships over the seven seas down through to the present. Squire came by his exploring, roaming, and roving proclivities naturally.

He has worked as a laborer, carpenter, stone mason, Fuller Brushman, sheep herder, Irish Wolfhound breeder, IBM tabulating machine operator, steel mill grinder, and photographer. He served as office manager on twelve river construction contracts building locks, dams, bridges, and other projects on the Ohio, Mississippi, Saint Lawrence, Detroit, Arkansas, Monongahela, and Schuylkil Rivers. He was called in as management consultant on the building of the overhead expressway of Interstate 35 through Austin, Texas. He has managed a real estate office, been a volunteer fireman, was partner of a graphic arts company, and served six years as a Justice of the Peace.

Starting as a street vendor, he developed the Charles Lewis Company which became world famous in pioneering the importation of Mexican folk art and weavings. Museums, universities, governments, and preservation societies around the world were among his clients and all of the original primitive Mexican folk artists were his friends. He appeared as guest speaker on five ethnic and art related television shows and has given numerous exhibits and shows for private organizations.

It's so grand to look back and realize that so many things you made your mind accept as quite ordinary were, in reality, great adventures maybe my whole life has been such great fun just because of all the times I allowed the fixes I got into to be scary and dangerous . . . children know how to do this better than we do and look at all the exciting times they have

Squire C. Lewis
Round Rock, Texas 1992